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The Truth Speaks

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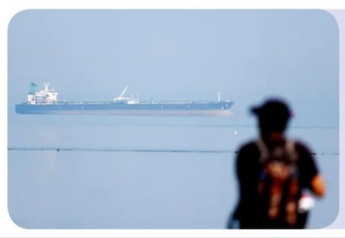

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Pete Hegseth: 'Don't worry about Strait of Hormuz closure'

U.S. Defense Secretary Hegseth says Strait of Hormuz closure poses no threat

WASHINGTON D.C.

U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth on Friday dismissed fears over the Strait of Hormuz closure due to the Iran war, saying, "We have been dealing with it, and don't need to worry about it."

Hegseth told reporters at the Pentagon that Iran's attempts to disrupt shipping in the strategic waterway are being managed. "We have a plan for every option here… it's not a strait we're going to allow to remain contested," he said.

Oil prices have surged from $67 to around $93 per barrel since the conflict escalated on February 28. While Energy Secretary Chris Wright noted the U.S. Navy is not yet ready to escort tankers, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent confirmed that escort operations will begin as soon as "militarily possible."

"Assurances from Washington may calm markets temporarily, but any disruption in the Strait of Hormuz still carries enormous risks for global oil supply and shipping security."
—Pete Hegseth, U.S. Defense Secretary

Hegseth emphasized that Iran has historically threatened the strait and that the Pentagon has long anticipated such scenarios. Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Dan Caine noted multiple options exist to remove mines and ensure safe passage.

Despite the assurances, analysts remain skeptical about immediate solutions, citing Iran's enhanced military capabilities and logistical constraints in implementing a full-scale tanker escort. RBC Capital Markets highlighted that existing insurance programs cover only 22 miles of the strait and lack casualty or environmental coverage.

Iran leaders march in Tehran amid US-Israeli strikes, defy pressure

TEHRAN

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and top officials joined thousands at the annual Quds Day rally in Tehran on Friday, even as nearby US-Israeli airstrikes targeted the capital. State TV showed Pezeshkian greeting supporters, posing for selfies in the rain, and emphasizing the nation's resilience.

National security chief Ali Larijani called the strikes "out of desperation," while judiciary chief Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejei raised his fist defiantly amid explosions. Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi blamed Israel and the US for surging global energy prices, calling them "responsible for the disaster in the region."

Holding images of late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and his son Mojtaba, protesters trampled on pictures of US President Donald Trump and Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu. Pezeshkian said Trump "doesn't understand that the Iranian people are brave, strong, and determined," adding that pressure would only strengthen the nation's resolve.

Despite US-Israeli airstrikes in central Tehran, Iranian leaders and citizens marched in defiance, emphasizing national strength and support for Palestine.

At least one civilian, a woman, was killed in the strikes. Russian media shared videos of Iranian leaders mingling with the crowd, marking their most high-profile public appearance since the February 28 attack that killed Khamenei and other officials.

Rs 2.81 lakh crore supplementary spending approved to manage unforeseen crisis

Economic Stabilisation Fund to bolster India's fiscal readiness: FM

NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday said the newly proposed Rs 1 lakh crore Economic Stabilisation Fund will provide fiscal headroom to respond to unexpected challenges, including the ongoing West Asia crisis and supply chain disruptions. Replying to the Lok Sabha debate on supplementary demands for grants, she stated that the Rs 2.81 lakh crore additional spending for 2025-26, including Rs 19,230 crore for fertiliser subsidies, Rs 23,641 crore for PMGKAY, and Rs 41,822 crore for defence, will keep the fiscal deficit within revised estimates of 4.4% of GDP.

Sitharaman emphasized that the fund will allow India to tackle shocks without deviating from the fiscal consolidation roadmap. "In anticipation of what cannot be anticipated, we are creating the Economic Stabilisation Fund," she said. She highlighted that Rs 95,000 crore has also been earmarked under the VB-G RAM G scheme for 2026-27.

The Finance Minister criticized opposition disruptions during her speech, urging parties to rise above politics in times of global crises. She said the supplementary grants ensure no shortage of fertilisers for farmers and strengthen India's capacity to absorb economic shocks, reinforcing confidence in macroeconomic stability while safeguarding social welfare and defence priorities.

₹1 Lakh Cr Stabilisation Fund to Absorb Economic Shocks

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman unveiled a ₹1 lakh crore Economic Stabilisation Fund to support India in managing unforeseen global challenges, including the West Asia conflict and supply chain disruptions. Speaking in the Lok Sabha, she stated that supplementary spending of ₹2.81 lakh crore for 2025–26 will keep the fiscal deficit at 4.4% of GDP while ensuring continued fertiliser subsidies, welfare programmes, and defence preparedness.

Oppn MPs Move to Remove CEC Gyanesh Kumar

NEW DELHI

In a historic first, Opposition MPs from the I.N.D.I.A. bloc submitted notices in both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha on Friday seeking the removal of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar. The 10-page notices, signed by 130 Lok Sabha MPs and 63 Rajya Sabha MPs, accuse Kumar of seven charges including "partisan and discriminatory" conduct, "proven misbehaviour," and deliberate obstruction of electoral fraud investigations.

The move follows the rejection of an earlier opposition resolution to remove Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. Opposition leaders contend that constitutional functionaries, including the CEC, have displayed bias toward the ruling BJP, disadvantaging other parties. If admitted in both Houses, the Speaker and Rajya Sabha Chairman will constitute a probe panel, including the Supreme Court Chief Justice, a High Court Chief Justice, and an eminent jurist, to investigate the allegations.

"All Religions Preach Love"

MYSURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said that although he has witnessed many victories and defeats during his four to five decades of political life, he has never forgotten public service.

He was speaking after participating in the Samprokshana, re-installation Kumbhabhishekam and Mahadwara Pooja Mahotsava of Sri Beereshwaraswamy Temple, organised at Varakodu Gadi Gurumatha in Varuna.

He said devotion must be pure, and God is pleased only through humanity and concern for the welfare of others. God is omnipresent, and all religions preach love. People have participated in the temple rituals and fairs of Sri Beereshwaraswamy with great joy. He prayed that Sri Beereshwaraswamy would bring prosperity and well-being to all the people of the state.

Siddaramaiah said his political journey began in this very region in 1978, where he received immense public support. Since then, the people of Chamundeshwari and Varuna constituencies have continued to support him. With the blessings of the people here, he got the opportunity to serve as Chief Minister and Finance Minister and to present the State Budget 17 times.

"Though I have seen political wins and losses, I will never forget public service".
—Siddaramaiah, Chief Minister

He said he had contested 13 elections and even during the four times he faced defeat, the people of this region continued to support him. The contribution of the people here to his political life is unparalleled, he added.

He also said that with the guidance of his teachers, he received an education and got the opportunity to serve the people as a lawyer and later as a politician. Though his political career has seen both victories and defeats, he has never forgotten public service. He said he would remain dedicated to serving the people until his last breath.

He added that Yathindra Siddaramaiah has been working for the development of the constituency and appealed to the people to support him. He also said that his government has been implementing several welfare schemes and guarantee programmes for the poor belonging to various castes, religions and sections across the state.

QUICK READ

W. Asia tensions erase ₹39 lakh cr from Indian markets

MUMBAI: Escalating tensions in West Asia triggered a sharp sell-off in Indian equity markets, wiping out nearly ₹39 lakh crore of investor wealth in the past two weeks. The benchmark BSE Sensex slipped below 75,000 on Friday, falling 1,470 points to close at 74,563. The Nifty 50 also dropped 488 points to settle at 23,151. Rising crude oil prices, a weakening rupee and heavy foreign institutional investor selling triggered panic across markets.

India, US reaffirm trade talks, ministry denies any pause

NEW DELHI: India and the United States continue active negotiations on a bilateral trade agreement, the Commerce Ministry clarified on Friday, denying reports of any halt in discussions. The ministry emphasized that both sides remain engaged to achieve a mutually beneficial deal. The clarification follows heightened scrutiny from the United States Trade Representative.

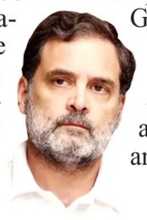
Kanshi Ram would have been Cong CM under Nehru: Rahul

LUCKNOW

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday made a bold claim about Dalit icon Kanshi Ram, saying that if India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had been alive during Kanshi Ram's rise, he "would have been a chief minister from the Congress."

Speaking at the Samvidhan Sammelan in Lucknow ahead of Kanshi Ram's birth anniversary, Gandhi praised the BSP founder for never compromising on principles, placing him alongside Mahatma Gandhi and B.R. Ambedkar. "The path on which we were moving, we should have moved at a faster pace. There have been shortcomings on the part of the Congress party," Gandhi said.

The BSP, led by Kanshi Ram's protege and former UP CM Mayawati, has had a strained relationship with both Congress and the Samajwadi Party. Analysts note that the party's vote share has sharply declined—from over 27% in 2009 to under 10% by 2024—with the non-Jatav Dalit base increasingly aligning with the SP-Congress alliance.



Mayawati has sought to maintain the BSP as a standalone third force ahead of the 2027 UP assembly elections, while other claimants of Kanshi Ram's legacy, like Chandrashekhar Azad of the Azad Samaj Party (Kanshi Ram), have also emerged. Rahul Gandhi's Dalit outreach highlights constitutional guarantees of equality, aiming to counter BJP's upper-caste and non-Yadav OBC base and the SP's pichhda-Dalit-minority strategy in upcoming polls.

Cong denies resort politics in B'luru ahead of Odisha RS polls

BENGALURU

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Friday denied calling Odisha Congress MLAs to Bengaluru ahead of the biennial Rajya Sabha elections, while confirming that he would meet them after the Legislative Assembly session concludes. Eight MLAs, including Odisha chief whip C S Raazen Ekka, are staying at a private resort in Bengaluru.

Shivakumar clarified that the Odisha PCC president had invited the legislators, and he only arranged accommodation and will meet them later. "I have not called Odisha MLAs; they have come to Bengaluru. I will go and meet them after the session is over," he said. He dismissed speculations of cross-voting and Operation Lotus, noting that hosting legislators at resorts for safety is "nothing new," citing his prior experience during Rajya Sabha polls in other states.

While six MLAs arrived Thursday night, two more reached Bengaluru on Friday. Congress leader Battappa said around 20 rooms have been booked at the resort for the legislators, personal staff, and family members. Shivakumar is expected to visit the resort later in the day.

Eight Odisha Congress MLAs staying at private resort in Bengaluru; Deputy CM DK Shivakumar says he will meet them post-session.

Congress leaders from Odisha, including MLA Taraprasad Bahinipati, reiterated that the visit is voluntary, not linked to horse-trading, and assured that all eight MLAs will support the joint candidate Datteshwar Hota in the Rajya Sabha elections. Polling for the four Upper House seats is scheduled for March 16, with counting on the same day.

OMAN DRONE ATTACK DEATHS

2 Indians killed, 10 injured in drone strike at Oman industrial area

NEW DELHI

Two Indian nationals were killed and 10 others injured in a drone attack on the Al Awahi Industrial Area in Sohar, Oman, on Friday, officials said. This marks the first Indian fatalities on land in West Asia since the Iran-US conflict began on February 28.

Aseem Mahajan, Joint Secretary (Gulf) at the Ministry of External Affairs, confirmed that five of the injured Indians have already been discharged from local hospitals, while the remaining five are receiving treatment. "None of them is reported to have serious injuries. Our mission is in close touch with the concerned company and local authorities and is rendering all assistance," he said.

Oman News Agency reported that two unmanned aerial vehicles crashed in Sohar, with one striking the industrial zone, leading to the deaths of two expatriate workers.

Since the conflict began, three Indian sailors have been killed in attacks on merchant vessels and tankers, with one more reported missing. The government has been actively ensuring the safety of over 10 million Indians in West Asia. Mahajan added that 150,000 Indians have returned to India since February 28, including 2,900 from Qatar and 1,000 from Bahrain, while regular commercial flights continue from the UAE and Saudi Arabia.

The Ministry of External Affairs continues to coordinate the repatriation of the injured and deceased, maintaining close contact with local authorities and companies in the region.

QUICK READ

Temperatures set to rise further across Karnataka

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Temperatures are expected to increase further in many parts of Karnataka from the second week of March, the Meteorological Department has said. Dry weather and rising heat have already been reported in several districts over the past few days and similar conditions are likely to continue. According to officials, coastal districts including Udupi, Dakshina Kannada and Uttara Kannada will also experience dry weather in the coming days. Doctors have advised people to avoid unnecessary outdoor activities between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m., warning that the risk of heat stroke and dehydration is higher among the elderly, children, pregnant women and heart patients.

Cylinder stolen from house amid LPG shortage fears

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Amid rising concerns over an LPG shortage, a cooking gas cylinder was reportedly stolen from a house in Bengaluru South district. The incident occurred at Krishnappa's residence when the family was away. The theft came to light when the family later attempted to replace the kitchen cylinder and found the spare one missing from the compound where it was usually kept. Krishnappa checked the CCTV footage and discovered the theft, police said. According to officials, a youth arrived on a gearless scooter with another person, located the cylinder, lifted it and walked away from the premises.

SP warns rowdies of Goonda Act, urges them to lead lawful lives

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Bengaluru Rural SP Chandrakanth warned habitual offenders to reform and contribute to a healthy society, cautioning that the Goonda Act would be invoked against those continuing criminal activities. The warning came during a rowdy parade held at the Anekal police station on Friday, where active rowdies from the Anekal police sub-division were summoned. However, less than 110 of the 564 rowdies from six police stations attended the parade, drawing public criticism over the low turnout. The warning follows public anger after the kidnapping and murder of Honnakalasapur Gopal, an incident that triggered protests over law and order in Anekal.

Thousands await compensation after consumer court rulings

Thousands of consumers in Karnataka still waiting to receive compensation despite favourable verdicts

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

More than 10,000 consumers in Karnataka are awaiting compensation or compliance with orders issued by consumer courts, highlighting persistent challenges in enforcing verdicts delivered by the dispute redressal mechanism.

According to data from the Karnataka State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, as many as 10,108 execution cases remain pending as of January 2026. At the state commission level, 1,841 execution petitions have been filed since its inception, of which 605 are still pending.

The burden is even heavier at the district level. Across 34 district consumer commissions, 68,606 execution petitions have been filed so far. While 59,103 cases have been disposed of, 9,503 remain pending for recovery of compensation or compliance with court directions.

Under the Consumer Protection Act, orders issued by consumer commissions must be complied with within 30 days. Failure to do so can attract penalties ranging from Rs 25,000 to Rs 1 lakh. Despite this provision, officials say many opposite parties delay or avoid complying with orders.

Belagavi district currently tops the list for pending execution cases, followed by Bengaluru Urban, Mysuru, Dharwad and Bengaluru Urban IV Additional commission. Officials noted that while consumer commissions are relatively efficient in disposing of complaints, enforcing the orders afterwards remains a major challenge. Pending cases often involve recovery of money, return of original sale deeds, handing over flats to buyers or completing bank-related transactions.

"In many cases, the opposite party is unwilling to comply even after the commission issues clear directions," an official said.

A consumer from Jayanagar in Bengaluru, who won a case against a telecom company over a housing project, said he is still waiting to receive the Rs 10 lakh awarded to him. "It is my hard-earned money," he said.

Unlike civil courts, consumer forums do not have bailiffs to enforce orders, making implementation largely dependent on voluntary compliance.

To address the issue, the commission has sought police assistance in executing orders, particularly in cases involving property attachment or arrest warrants. The police department has now assigned one officer to each commission to help with enforcement.

Meanwhile, the insurance sector has recorded the highest number of complaints in the state, followed by housing and banking, reflecting the areas where consumers face the most disputes.

Media must clearly understand whose side they stand on: CM

BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said the media must clearly understand their role in society and focus on whether the government is working for the last person. He emphasized that journalists should uphold professional ethics and remain committed to truth.

He spoke while presenting the "Annual Awards for the year 2025" to selected journalists at an event organized by the Karnataka Media Academy in Bengaluru.

Referring to Mahatma Gandhi, who was also a journalist, Siddaramaiah said journalists should stand for Sarvodaya (welfare of all) and Antyodaya (upliftment of the last person). He noted that although India has completed 75 years of independence, inequality still persists. He also cited B. R. Ambedkar, who had said that if inequality continues, independence loses its meaning.

The Chief Minister said he begins his day by reading newspapers before starting other work, adding that newspapers still maintain a high level of credibility, while he watches television less often.

He observed that speculative journalism is increasing and called for more journalists to practice truth-based and research-oriented reporting instead of spreading false information. He also stressed that journalists should not be influenced by any particular group or ideology and must present facts objectively, like a mirror.

Highlighting the rapid growth of technology, Siddaramaiah said the media industry and journalists must upgrade their skills and prepare for new challenges.

KARNATAKA BILL BACKS FREEDOM IN MARRIAGE

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Karnataka government has cleared a new bill aimed at preventing honour killings and protecting individuals' freedom of choice in marriage, proposing stringent punishments for crimes committed in the name of honour or tradition.

Titled "Eva Nammava, Eva Nammava, 2026," the proposed legislation prescribes a minimum prison term of five years for those found guilty of causing death or violence against couples for choosing partners against family or community wishes. All such offences under the proposed law will be treated as cognizable and non-bailable.

The bill is expected to be tabled during the ongoing budget session of the state legislature. According to officials, the legislation has been framed to clearly emphasise the freedom of individuals to marry a partner of their choice and to curb caste-based violence linked to such relationships.

The government decided to introduce the separate law after debates on whether existing provisions under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and other criminal laws were sufficient to deal with honour killing cases. Authorities said the new bill will provide clearer legal provisions to address crimes specifically motivated by honour-related considerations.

Under the bill, anyone causing death or committing acts that result in the death of a couple, or either of them, in the name of honour will face a minimum jail term of five years, without affecting the punishment already prescribed under the BNS.

Cabinet clears Suryanagar cricket stadium, approves Advertising Policy

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The State Cabinet has approved the construction of an international cricket stadium in Suryanagar near Bengaluru along with the new Karnataka Advertising Policy-2026 aimed at streamlining the release of government advertisements across media platforms.

The proposed cricket stadium will come up on 75 acres of land in Suryanagar Phase-4 in Anekal taluk under the "KHB Surya Sports Village" project. The Cabinet has granted approval only for the construction of the stadium at an estimated cost of ₹800 crore.

Officials clarified that other components of the proposed sports village, including the stadium complex and related infrastructure works, have not yet received approval from the Cabinet.

The government also cleared the Karnataka Advertising Policy-2026 to regulate and streamline the process of issuing advertisements related to government departments and public institutions.

The Cabinet also approved construction of railway barricades within Bannerghatta National Park to prevent human-wildlife conflict at an estimated cost of ₹10.83 crore.

The Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) is responsible for releasing advertisements of government departments, Panchayat Raj institutions, municipal corporations, local bodies, authorities, boards and corporations across newspapers, radio, television and electronic media. The new policy aims to ensure maximum publicity for government programmes while keeping expenditure under control.

Officials said the existing Advertisement Policy-2013 and its implementation rules framed in 2014 had completed the five-year period originally envisaged at the time of formulation. As a result, the policy required revision to align it with current media practices and the Central government's advertising guidelines.

The new Karnataka Advertising Policy-2026 has therefore been formulated by revising the earlier policy and integrating provisions from both the 2013 policy and the 2014 implementation rules.

Apart from these decisions, the Cabinet also granted administrative approval for repairing the boiling house of the Mysore Sugar Company and installing new machinery capable of crushing 5,000 tonnes of sugarcane per day at an estimated cost of ₹60 crore.

In another decision, six acres of land in Vijayapura district, earlier leased, has been permanently allotted to AVS Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya of BLDE for construction of college buildings, playground facilities and cultivation of medicinal plants.

PU colleges told to adopt child protection norms

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The School Education Department (Pre-University) has directed all pre-university (PU) colleges in Karnataka to implement key child protection measures recommended by the Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (KSCPCR). In a circular issued recently, the department mandated the formation of child protection committees in every PU college, appointment of qualified counsellors and the implementation of cyber safety policies to safeguard students. The move comes amid concerns over a rise in cases involving teenage pregnancy, offences under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, child marriages and online sexual exploitation reported across the country and the state KSCPCR member K.T. Thippeswamy, in a letter to the department, said that during visits to several PU colleges across the state, the commission found that many institutions lacked adequate mechanisms to prevent such risks and ensure student safety.

LPG shortage hits craft breweries

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Bengaluru's craft beer industry is beginning to feel the impact of the ongoing LPG shortage, with several microbreweries warning of a slowdown in production if the supply situation continues during the peak summer season.

Breweries in the city depend heavily on LPG cylinders to run boilers used in the brewing process. With suppliers reportedly restricting the sale of industrial cylinders, many establishments fear disruptions in production and business operations.

Industry insiders said that depending on the size of the facility and production capacity, a typical craft brewery requires between five and 15 LPG cylinders a day to maintain regular brewing schedules.

Mukesh Tolani, co-founder of Toit Brewpub, said the brewery currently has sufficient LPG stock only for a few days. "We have enough stock of LPG to last until Sunday. To avoid disruption in production, we are speaking to our vendor to see if we can shift from LPG to diesel," he said.

Tolani added that the team is also trying to optimise LPG consumption by installing electric grillers and induction plates in their kitchens.

Bengaluru is home to more than 80 microbreweries, most of which are popular among the city's young crowd and see a surge in demand during the summer months.

Prasanna Kumar, co-founder of Bengaluru Brewing Company, said their existing beer stock may last only around two weeks if the gas supply situation does not improve.

"Gas is the primary fuel for running the boiler during the brewing process. The boiler generates steam and heat needed to process the malt," he said. Switching to alternatives such as firewood or electric boilers on short notice is both costly and time-consuming, and may also affect the taste and quality of the beer, he added.

Restaurants attached to breweries are also making adjustments. PV Nirmal, co-founder of Mannheim Craft Brewery, said the LPG shortage has forced them to rethink their menu.

"We are modifying our menu and focusing on dishes that require less heat. Some cuisines such as Asian, Chinese and Italian require high heat, so we are shifting towards simpler cooking methods," he said.

Industry representatives say the uncertainty over LPG supplies is creating anxiety among restaurant and pub owners, who fear that prolonged shortages could affect customer footfall and weekend business.

MILK ADULTERATION DETECTED

3,049 milk samples found adulterated in Karnataka over past one year

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Adulteration was detected in 3,049 samples of milk supplied to dairies across Karnataka during the one-year period from January 2025 to January 2026, the Legislative Council was informed on Thursday.

Replying to a question raised by Madhu G. Madegowda, Minister K.N. Bhosaraju answered on behalf of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah that a total of 15,15,575 milk samples were collected and tested from 19 milk unions and dairy units across the state during the period.

Among the districts, Hassan reported the highest number of adulterated samples at 788. This was followed by Ballari with 588 cases, Shivamogga with 434, Mandya with 418 and Kalaburagi with 315 samples found to be adulterated.

The Minister also informed the House that adulteration was detected in milk supplied by a private dairy company, Dodla.

However, no adulteration cases were detected in several districts and units, including Kolar, Chikkaballapur and Dakshina Kannada. Similarly, no adulteration was found in samples tested at the Nandini Hi-Tech Product Plant at Channarayapatna, the Nandini Hi-Tech Mega Powder Plant, Kanva in Ramanagara district and Mother Dairy.

Despite milk adulteration being a serious offence punishable with a minimum of three months' imprisonment and up to life imprisonment, no criminal cases have been registered against those who supplied adulterated milk to the dairies so far.

Officials said that when adulteration is detected in milk supplied by district milk unions to primary milk producers' cooperative societies, the milk is rejected and the producers are informed. The executive boards and staff of the societies concerned are also warned against repeating such practices.

Authorities also conduct visits to the societies where adulteration has been detected and carry out further testing of milk samples.

Bhosaraju said that tests have revealed the presence of substances such as salt and sugar in some milk supplied by producers to cooperative societies.

To strengthen monitoring, adulteration testing kits have been provided to all primary milk producers' cooperative societies. Milk supplied to dairies is accepted only after undergoing multiple quality checks.

He added that the Central Vigilance Unit at KMF has formed a special team to detect adulteration in milk sold under the Nandini brand, and police complaints are filed if adulterated milk is found in the market.

QUICK READ

Fake account used to abuse actor Darshan's wife

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Central Crime Branch (CCB) police have filed a preliminary chargesheet in the case related to abusive and obscene messages sent to actor Darshan's wife, Vijayalakshmi, on social media. According to police sources, a 473-page chargesheet has been submitted before the 45th ACMM Court against six accused who were arrested during the investigation. Vijayalakshmi had earlier filed a complaint with the cyber crime police alleging that she was receiving abusive and obscene messages online. Based on her complaint, police launched an investigation and traced the suspects involved. Investigators found that some of the accused had created fake social media accounts posing as fans of a Sandalwood actor. Using these accounts, they allegedly targeted Vijayalakshmi and sent abusive and obscene messages. The CCB police said further investigation in the case is continuing.

Two beaten over suspected child abduction bid

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Two men were allegedly assaulted by members of the public on suspicion of attempting to abduct a child near Vidyanagar in Yelahanka. According to police, the two unidentified men approached a house and asked for water. When the housewife went inside to bring water, she noticed that her child was missing and raised an alarm. Family members and neighbours began searching for the child and soon spotted the two men walking with the child near Vidyanagar Cross. Suspecting an abduction attempt, local residents confronted and allegedly beat up the men. One of the injured is about 63 years old while the other is around 26. Police are investigating the incident.

K'taka offers support to tourists stranded by West Asia conflict

Tourism fair showcases Karnataka's destinations to travel stakeholders

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Karnataka is preparing to host and assist international tourists stranded due to the ongoing conflict in West Asia, Tourism Minister H.K. Patil said on Friday, adding that the state is also intensifying efforts to promote its cultural heritage and tourism potential.

Speaking at the three-day Travel and Tourism Fair (TTF) at Tripura Vasini, Palace Grounds, the minister said that while the conflict has not directly affected India, it has disrupted travel plans of several foreign tourists, particularly those from the Middle East.

"Some international tourists are unable to return to their home countries due to visa or travel-related restrictions. The state government will ensure their stay in Karnataka is comfortable until the situation stabilises," Patil said. He added that the government would facilitate visa-related support and necessary assistance to such visitors.

The minister said Karnataka is also focusing on preserving its rich heritage through excavation projects and the development of open-air museums.

One such initiative is planned in Lakundi, a historic town known for its ancient temples and architecture. According to Patil, around 1,500 artefacts have already been collected in the region and nearly 3,500 items have been studied as part of research efforts. Recently, a family donated a 600-year-old ornament used to adorn a deity, which experts have valued at around ₹5 crore.

Patil emphasised that the state is working to expand tourism in multiple segments, including eco-tourism, adventure tourism, educational tourism and farm tourism.

Highlighting the role of travel exhibitions, he said fairs like the TTF provide an opportunity for visitors and tour operators to explore tourism offerings in one place. "Such exhibitions help bring attention to many heritage sites and tourism products that are not usually showcased," he said.

The minister also noted that Karnataka has more than 25,000 monuments, including globally recognised heritage sites such as Hampi, Belur, Badami, Pattadakal and areas in the Western Ghats.

Dr K.V. Thrilok Chandra, Secretary of Tourism, said the fair features representatives from more than 150 organisations, including participants from various Indian states and countries such as Vietnam.

He added that public-private partnerships play a key role in tourism promotion, with nearly 95 percent of the 150 stalls at the exhibition operated by private stakeholders, helping promote unexplored destinations and strengthen the tourism economy.

Andhra excise policy hits liquor sales in Karnataka

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Karnataka government has admitted that liquor sales in the state have declined, attributing the drop mainly to Andhra Pradesh's new excise policy, along with unfavourable weather conditions such as heavy rains and unusually cold temperatures in some regions.

Leader of the House N.S. Boseraju, replying on behalf of the Excise Minister in the Legislative Council to a question raised by Congress member Nagaraj Yadav, said the state has recorded lower excise revenue than expected. According to the latest figures, the state has collected ₹37,531 crore in excise revenue so far, which is about ₹4,000 crore less than the target set for the current financial year. Officials also noted that beer sales have declined by 14.59 per cent by the end of January in the 2025–26 financial year compared with the previous year.

The minister explained that a major factor behind the decline is the new excise policy introduced by neighbouring Andhra Pradesh. Earlier, a significant number of customers from Andhra Pradesh used to travel to Karnataka's border districts to purchase liquor.

However, with changes in Andhra Pradesh's tax and pricing structure, the number of such buyers has reduced considerably. The districts that have been affected include Kolar, Chikkaballapur, Tumakuru, Chitradurga, Ballari and Raichur.

In addition to policy changes in the neighbouring state, weather conditions also played a role. Boseraju said heavy rainfall and unusually cold weather in certain districts during the season had contributed to lower beer consumption.

To address the revenue gap, the government has constituted a resource mobilisation committee to examine the current taxation system and suggest ways to improve revenue collection.

> The minister also noted that "candied fruit" mixed with chloral hydrate powder is legally produced and consumed in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Authorities in Karnataka are taking strict measures to prevent its entry into the state. Public awareness campaigns are also being conducted in villages and urban wards about the harmful effects of consuming such substances.

CM to chair meeting on Ballari airport project soon

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Infrastructure Development Minister M.B. Patil on Friday said a meeting of public representatives from Ballari, Vijayanagara and Koppal districts will soon be convened under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister to discuss the proposed Ballari airport project.

Replying to a question raised by Gangavathi MLA G. Janardhana Reddy in the Legislative Assembly, the minister said the government has identified a new site about 19 km from Ballari for the proposed airport. The project is intended to benefit several surrounding regions including Ballari, Hosapete, Hampi, Anegondi, Sandur, Koppal, Kurugodu and Siruguppa.

Patil said the feasibility of the newly identified site will be examined by the Airports Authority of India (AAI). If the location is found suitable, further steps will be taken after consulting elected representatives from the three districts.

The proposed site is located about 33 km from Hosapete, 26 km from Hampi, 33 km from Sandur, 75 km from Koppal, 14 km from Kurugodu, 13 km from Toranagallu and 43 km from Siruguppa.

The minister emphasized that airport planning should be done with long-term vision to avoid the challenges faced by some existing regional airports. He noted that airports in Hubballi, Belagavi and Vijayapura have faced limitations due to location-related issues.

He added that the Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board (KIADB) has identified two potential sites in Ballari district measuring about 800 acres and 1,200 acres for the project.

Patil also said several regional airports across the country face operational challenges. He suggested that the Union government extend the UDAN regional connectivity scheme from three to five years and support airport operations jointly with state governments to ensure sustainability of regional air services.

115 KSRTC buses launched by Minister Ramalinga Reddy

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Transport and Muzrai Minister Ramalinga Reddy inaugurated 115 new buses for the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) during the International Women's Day celebrations held at the corporation's Central Office on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister flagged off 70 non-AC sleeper Pallakki buses and 45 Karnataka Sarige buses, which will strengthen connectivity across several key destinations. The Pallakki services will operate to major locations including Udupi, Mangaluru, Mysuru, Dharmasthala, Sringeri, Chikkamagaluru, Hampi, Hyderabad, Chennai, Kozhikode and Ernakulam.

Reddy also announced that 805 additional Karnataka Sarige and urban and rural transport buses would be added to the state transport fleet between April and June 2026.

Highlighting the significance of International Women's Day, observed globally on March 8, the minister said the day recognises women's achievements and contributions in fields such as education, science, social service, politics and the economy. He stressed that empowering women through equal opportunities and ensuring their safety and dignity in society remains a priority.

The minister also praised Padma Shri awardee Dr V. Shubha, who served at the CSIR–National Aerospace Laboratories in Bengaluru. She developed the indigenous runway visibility system "Drishti", which assists aircraft in landing safely during foggy conditions.

According to officials, the four state transport corporations in Karnataka employ about 1.04 lakh staff, including 8,956 women working as conductors, technical staff and in administrative positions.

The government's Shakti Scheme, which allows women to travel free on state-run buses, has benefited about 688.83 crore passengers as of March 12. As part of the celebrations, 46 women employees from 17 divisions were honoured for their outstanding service.

Officials also highlighted several welfare initiatives for women employees, including menstrual leave, maternity benefits, childcare support, scholarships for employees' daughters and cashless healthcare facilities under the KSRTC Arogya scheme.

50 divisions, 150 sub-divisions created under GBA

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) has announced the creation of 50 divisions and 150 sub-divisions to improve administrative efficiency following the reorganisation of 369 wards across the city.

Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao issued a circular outlining the new administrative structure, which aims to streamline the functioning of key departments such as Revenue, Works and Health under the newly established city corporations.

The changes come after the Greater Bengaluru Governance Act, 2024 came into effect on May 15, 2025. With the implementation of the Act, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) was dissolved and replaced by the Greater Bengaluru Authority to oversee governance in the city.

Under the GBA framework, five new city corporations have been created: Bengaluru Central City Corporation, Bengaluru East City Corporation, Bengaluru West City Corporation, Bengaluru North City Corporation and Bengaluru South City Corporation. A Ward Delimitation Commission was constituted to reorganise wards within these corporations. As a result, a total of 369 wards have been formed under the jurisdiction of the five corporations.

To ensure smooth administrative functioning, the GBA has now established divisions and sub-divisions across these corporations. According to the circular, the Bengaluru Central City Corporation, which has 63 wards, will have seven divisions and 24 sub-divisions. The Bengaluru East City Corporation, with 50 wards, will have seven divisions and 22 sub-divisions.

The Bengaluru West City Corporation, the largest among the five with 112 wards, will have 15 divisions and 45 sub-divisions. Similarly, the Bengaluru North City Corporation, which comprises 72 wards, will have 11 divisions and 30 sub-divisions. The Bengaluru South City Corporation, also with 72 wards, will have 10 divisions and 29 sub-divisions.

Create awareness for self-confidence in rural women: ZP CEO

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Mandya Zilla Panchayat Chief Executive Officer Dr. K.R. Nandini has stressed the need to create greater awareness programmes to instill self-confidence among women, particularly in rural areas.

Speaking at an International Women's Day programme organised at JSS Academy of Technical Education on Kengeri–Uttarahalli Main Road, she said respecting women is everyone's foremost responsibility. She added that women have proved their strength and capability by excelling in various fields.

"Women are not weak but strong. They have demonstrated their abilities by contributing in all sectors alongside men," she said, referring to achievements by women in sports and other professional fields.

Film actress Deepa Ravi Shankar, who also addressed the gathering, said women play a vital role in the progress of society. She noted that behind the success of many men, there is often the support and sacrifice of women. She encouraged women to work towards social development by engaging in community service and supporting the upliftment of the poor and underprivileged.

CELEBRATIONS DISRUPTED

LPG shortage hits wedding catering in city

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Bengaluru's busy wedding season has been severely affected as a shortage of commercial LPG cylinders has forced several caterers to scale down services or cancel bookings, disrupting celebrations across the city.

Catering firms and banquet hall operators said supplies have been irregular since March 9, leaving them struggling to run kitchens during a peak period that coincides with Ugadi celebrations and the start of the summer wedding season.

Most large catering services handle events serving between 500 and 2,000 guests daily. However, the shortage has made it difficult to operate equipment such as tandoors, burners and steamers that rely heavily on LPG.

Several caterers said their existing cylinder stocks are enough only for four to five days, forcing them to temporarily stop accepting new wedding contracts. One caterer in HSR Layout said he had recently launched a restaurant but had to shut operations within a week due to lack of LPG supply despite advance bookings.

Event organisers are now exploring alternatives such as coal or electric cooking. However, caterers say such options affect the taste and quality of food. "Coal-based cooking makes rotis harder and biryani loses flavour. It also slows down the preparation process," an event manager said.

City police intensify inspections to curb illegal LPG use

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Bengaluru City Police have intensified inspections across the city to prevent stockpiling and black-market sale of LPG cylinders following supply concerns linked to the ongoing West Asia crisis.

Acting on directions from City Police Commissioner M.A. Saleem, police teams have begun conducting surprise inspections at various locations, including godowns, warehouses and commercial establishments. Officials said LPG dealerships are also being monitored closely to ensure that cylinders are not diverted for illegal sale.

According to police officers, checks are being carried out at hotels, restaurants and other commercial establishments to verify whether they are using commercial LPG cylinders as required under regulations, rather than domestic cylinders meant strictly for household use.

Joint Commissioner of Police (East) Ramesh Banoth said instructions have been issued to officers to conduct surprise inspections across their jurisdictions. "We have held meetings with our officers and directed them to carry out checks at godowns and other locations to ensure that LPG cylinders are not illegally stocked or diverted," he said. Joint Commissioner of Police (West) C. Vamsi Krishna said the police are keeping a close watch on commercial establishments across the city. "As of now, no cases have been registered, but our teams are conducting regular inspections and monitoring the situation carefully," he said.

Home Minister G. Parameshwara also said the government is closely monitoring the situation and has directed police authorities to remain vigilant.

He said the Director General of Police has instructed officials to conduct raids wherever necessary.

QUICK READ

Truck plunges into Ravine; Driver survives

MUDIGERE

A 12-wheeler truck carrying cement from Dodda Ballapur to Hirebailu fell into a 600-foot ravine near Kelaguru Tea Estate in Mudigere taluk after the driver lost control on a sharp bend. The cabin was crushed, trapping the driver for nearly two hours. Locals, Balur police, and fire brigade personnel used a crane to lift the truck and rescue him. The injured driver was admitted to the hospital and escaped death. Police suspect overspeeding and reckless driving and have registered a case. Authorities urge caution on steep ghati roads in Chikkamagaluru district.

Backward classes students request SSP scholarship extension

KOPPAL

B.Ed students under the Backward Classes Welfare Department have requested an extension for the SSP scholarship application deadline. While other departments have a deadline of March 30, 2026, the backward classes department's last date is March 5, 2026. Students explained that late government counseling and delayed issuance of enrollment numbers prevented them from applying on time. They appealed to the authorities to extend the deadline in the academic interest of students. Officials are reviewing the request to ensure eligible candidates do not miss the scholarship opportunity and can benefit from the program as intended.

Man sentenced to death for brutal double murder

CHIKKAMAGALURU

In a chilling case from Kusuburi, NR Pura, Chikkamagaluru district court has sentenced Govindappa to death for murdering a couple in front of their 8-year-old son in 2019. The couple was attacked while sleeping, and the machete used in the crime was later found placed in a coconut tree. Authorities say the attack occurred against the backdrop of an alleged illegal relationship.

The case was registered at the N. Rpur police station, and the trial lasted several years. In addition to the death sentence for murder, Govindappa was also sentenced to one year in prison for house trespassing and fined Rs. 20,000. Government prosecutor P. Veena announced the verdict.The case drew widespread attention due to its brutality and the presence of the child witness.

Eshwarappa slams officials over Sharavathi Project secrecy

Rashtrakhandar Balghat and environmental groups met to address project concerns; activists' 32 questions remain unanswered by KPCL officials

SHIVAMOGGA

Former Deputy Chief Minister K. S. Eshwarappa strongly criticized officials of Karnataka Power Corporation Limited (KPCL) for failing to provide information about the proposed Sharavathi Pumped Storage Project during a meeting held at the District Collector's Office in Shivamogga.The meeting was organized jointly by Rashtrakhandar Balghat and several environmental organizations to discuss concerns about the project. Eshwarappa said that on February 7, activists had staged a protest at the Collector's Office and submitted 32 questions regarding the pumped storage project. However, KPCL officials had not given any reply even after more than a month.

During the meeting, when Eshwarappa asked officials what information they had brought, they reportedly said they had only discussed the matter with the Managing Director and would inform the next meeting date. This angered Eshwarappa, who questioned why they attended the meeting without any details.

He even tried to contact the KPCL Managing Director on his mobile phone. According to him, a staff member answered the call and said that the Managing Director had instructed officials not to share any information about the project. When Eshwarappa identified himself and asked who was speaking, the caller disconnected the phone, further upsetting him.Eshwarappa warned that he would seek details about the project through the court if information was not provided.

Environmental activist B. M. Kumaraswamy said earlier assurances to respond to concerns raised during a public consultation in Kargal had not been fulfilled.Deputy Commissioner Prabhulinga Kavalikatti said the issue is currently before the court and authorities must wait for its verdict.

Raghavendra requested Nirmala Sitharaman's support to add 30 NICU beds, enhancing emergency care and infrastructure for newborns

Raghavendra seeks modern NICU expansion for Shivamogga hospital

SHIVAMOGGA

Member of Parliament B. Y. Raghavendra has appealed for the modernization and expansion of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at the Shivamogga Institute of Medical Sciences hospital in Shivamogga. The proposal aims to improve treatment facilities for newborn babies from Malnad and nearby districts.

Raghavendra said the present NICU unit at the hospital is facing increasing pressure as more newborns require special medical care. To address this problem, he has requested Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to provide support for installing 30 additional well-equipped beds along with modern medical infrastructure.

According to the MP, the expansion project could be supported through the Minister's Area Development Fund or any other suitable government programme. The aim is to strengthen emergency care services for newborns and ensure timely treatment for babies who require intensive medical attention.

Raghavendra said the proposed expansion will benefit poor and needy families not only in Shivamogga district but also in neighbouring districts such as Davangere, Haveri, Chikkamagaluru and Uttara Kannada. Many families from these regions depend on the hospital for specialized newborn care.

He emphasized that timely medical care, proper monitoring and advanced treatment facilities can significantly reduce the mortality rate among newborn babies. Ensuring safe and healthy beginnings for infants is an important responsibility, he added.

Sources said the Union Finance Minister appreciated the concern shown by the MP for the health of newborn children from economically weaker families. She has assured that the Centre will consider providing the necessary support for the project.

The proposal is expected to strengthen neonatal healthcare services in the region once approved and implemented.

PUC STUDENT FALLS ILL DURING EXAM

BALLARI

A student taking her second PUC exam in Kurugodu town, Ballari, fell seriously ill on Friday, prompting immediate medical attention. Mala Genikehal reportedly suffered from severe headache, low blood pressure, and physical discomfort while writing her political science exam.

Staff and health assistants at the exam centre quickly admitted her to the Kurugodu Community Health Centre, where doctors provided emergency care. Authorities confirmed that her condition is now stable.

The illness is suspected to have been triggered by exam stress or weather conditions. Parents and local residents praised the swift response of college principal Venugopal, doctors Laxman Nayak, and nursing staff Shailaja, Vishalakshi, and Asha Kumari. Ambulance driver Suleman was also commended for his prompt assistance.

Bike rally held against polluting factories

KOPPAL

The 133rd-day protest demanded relocating polluting factories harming village health. Manjunath Sajjan warned white smoke may contain toxic gases, causing lung, nerve, and vision damage

Environmental activists and local residents organized a bike rally across several villages in Koppal district to raise awareness about pollution caused by factories near the Tungabhadra River. The rally was led by the joint action forum of the District Bachao Andolan Samiti and the Environmental Protection Forum.

The protest campaign has now entered its 133rd day. Activists demanded the relocation or closure of factories that they claim are polluting the environment and harming the health of people living in nearby villages. The rally passed through villages including Kidadala, Basapura, Ginigeri, Kanakapura, Kasanakandi, Hirebaganal, Chikkabaganal, Lachanakeri, Kunakeri Tanda and Halavarthi.

Speaking at a public meeting in Hirekasanakandi, environmental activist Manjunath Sajjan said the factories operating in the region are not environmentally friendly. He warned that white smoke released from factories may contain toxic gases that are more dangerous than visible black dust. According to him, long-term exposure to such pollution could cause serious health problems including lung disease, nerve damage and vision loss.

Forum convener Allama Prabhu urged authorities and the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board to take strict action against industries polluting the region. He alleged that chemical and fertilizer factories have contaminated groundwater and damaged agricultural lands in several villages.

Activists also claimed that pollution has affected crops, livestock and drinking water sources used by thousands of people in the area. They demanded that authorities immediately investigate the issue and take steps to protect public health and the environment.Several local leaders, social activists and residents participated in the rally and expressed concern about the growing environmental problems in the region.

No change in domestic LPG supply: DC

MANGALURU

Deputy Commissioner Darshan H. V. has clarified that there is no shortage or change in the supply of domestic cooking gas in the district and urged people not to panic.

Speaking to reporters at the Deputy Commissioner's office on Friday, he said LPG cylinders for household use are being supplied according to the existing rule of one cylinder every 25 days. Therefore, consumers should not rush to make multiple bookings out of fear of shortage.

The district administration has taken strict measures to ensure smooth supply and prevent agencies from storing excess stock at distribution centers. Police teams have inspected storage facilities in areas under the Mangaluru Police Commissionerate and other parts of the district to verify stock levels and prevent hoarding.A meeting was also held with officials of major public sector oil companies, including Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited to review the supply situation. Officials confirmed that adequate LPG stock is available and steps are being taken to ensure uninterrupted supply in the district and nearby regions that depend on LPG shipments from Hyderabad and Tamil Nadu.The Deputy Commissioner said LPG production at Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited continues normally, and additional LPG required by oil companies is also being imported.However, he noted that the supply of LPG for commercial purposes has been temporarily reduced until fresh guidelines are issued by the central and state governments.

Authorities are working to resolve the issue soon.

Holalu village celebrates Kalamma Devi festival with devotion and fervor

MANDYA

The festival of Sri Kalikamba Devi, popularly known as Kalamma Devi, the ancestral deity of the Ganga devotees, was celebrated with great enthusiasm in Holalu village of Mandya taluk.

On Thursday night, a special aarti was performed at the Sri Kalamma Devi temple on the outskirts of the village, where children and women offered prayers to the goddess.

On Friday, devotees gathered at the Sri Rama temple in Madhyaha village and proceeded in a colorful procession along the main streets of Holalu. The participants performed pujas at the Sri Doddammatai Temple and Sri Balamuri Ganapati Temple before reaching the Sri Kalamma Devi temple. Every family offered worship and cooked food using puja materials brought from home, which was then offered to the goddess. The temple was adorned with special floral decorations, and Mahamangalaarthi prasadam was distributed to the devotees.

Police urge harmony during Ramzan and Ugadi

KAMPLI

Police officials in Kampli have urged people to celebrate the upcoming festivals of Ramzan and Ugadi peacefully and in harmony. A peace meeting was organized by the police department at the Kampli Police Station hall ahead of the festivals. Addressing the gathering, DySP Prasad Gokhale said both Ramzan and Ugadi are important and sacred festivals for different communities. As the two festivals are falling around the same time this year, he appealed to people to maintain unity and celebrate them with mutual respect and cooperation.He also advised citizens not to believe rumours spread by miscreants during the festive period. According to him, maintaining peace and communal harmony is the responsibility of everyone in society. He warned that strict action would be taken against anyone found disturbing law and order during the celebrations.

DySP Gokhale also urged youth to follow traffic rules while taking part in festival activities. Reckless driving and violation of traffic regulations will not be tolerated, he added.Speaking at the meeting, Police Inspector Vasukumar said the police department has taken necessary steps to prevent any untoward incidents during the festive season. The main aim of the meeting was to ensure that the celebrations take place peacefully and without any disturbance.Community leaders, religious heads and representatives of various organizations attended the meeting and supported the appeal for harmony. Local elders and public representatives assured the police that residents would cooperate fully to maintain peace during the festivals.

PEACE TRUTH NONVIOLENCE

Gadag plans grand celebration for Mahavir Jayanti

GADAG

District authorities in Gadag have begun preparations to celebrate Mahavira Jayanti with special programs later this month. A preparatory meeting was held on Friday at the District Collector's Office hall under the chairmanship of Additional Deputy Commissioner Duragesh K. R. Officials and community representatives attended the meeting and discussed arrangements for the celebration.During the meeting, it was decided that Mahavir Jayanti will be celebrated on March 30 at 11 a.m. in the auditorium of the District Administration Building. The program will include offering floral tributes to the portrait of Bhagwan Mahavir and remembering his teachings of peace, truth and non-violence. Officials said the event will highlight the values preached by Mahavir and encourage people to follow them in daily life.The meeting also discussed preparations for the celebration of Devara Dasimayya Jayanti. Authorities decided to organize the event on March 23 at Devara Dasimayya Circle in Betageri. The Additional Deputy Commissioner instructed officials to ensure that the Jayanti is celebrated in a systematic and meaningful manner across the taluk.During the event,

students from the community who have scored high marks in SSLC and PUC examinations, graduates who won gold medals, and athletes who achieved success at the international level will be honoured. Social achievers will also be felicitated during the program. Officials discussed arrangements including stage setup, banners and refreshments. Tahsildar Srinivasa Murthy Kulkarni, Backward Classes Welfare Officer M.A. Thubaramatti and Minorities Welfare Officer Amit Bidari attended the meeting along with other department officials. Assistant Director of the Kannada and Culture Department Dr. Basavaraja V. Bellary welcomed the participants and thanked them.

VIRTUES AND GOODWILL LEAD WOMEN TOWARD BLISSFUL LIFE

KOPPAL

Women should cultivate goodwill, righteousness, and strong moral values to lead a happy and peaceful life, said Brahmakumari Yogini Akka during a World Women's Day program held in Koppal. The event was organized at the Prajapita Brahma Kumaris Ishwariya Vishwa Vidyalaya in the city and was attended by hundreds of participants.

Addressing the gathering, Yogini Akka said women hold a respected place in Indian culture and should uphold dignity and values in their lives. She noted that in Indian tradition, women are symbolically represented through goddesses such as Saraswati for knowledge, Lakshmi for wealth, and Durga for power, reflecting the importance and strength of women in society.

She stressed that spiritual strength is the true shield for women. According to her, women should aim not only for financial independence but also for mental and inner strength through spirituality and meditation. Yogini Akka described women as symbols of sacrifice, love, patience, and forgiveness, adding that their role is vital in turning a house into a peaceful home.

During the program, a special felicitation ceremony was held where daughters-in-law honored their mothers-in-law with gifts and sought their blessings. Mothers-in-law expressed gratitude and appreciated the gesture of respect and harmony.

QUICK READ

Chitradurga doctor secures fifth rank in MDS

Chitradurga

Dr. Sadhana S. M., senior resident doctor at Chitradurga Institute of Medical Sciences, has secured fifth rank in the state in the Postgraduate Dental Degree (MDS) examination conducted by Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences. She completed her MDS at SJM Dental College and Hospital in Chitradurga and earlier earned her BDS degree from Rajarajeshwari Dental College in Bengaluru, where she also won a gold medal. Dr. Sadhana is the daughter of Vedamurthy M.S. and Mangala M., employees of Myrad Institute. The college administration and staff congratulated her and praised the achievement as a proud moment for the institution.

CMCRI doctor earns prestigious medical AI degree

Chitradurga

Dr. Megha G. H., Head of the Department of Anesthesia at Chitradurga Medical College and Research Institute (CMCRI), has completed a medical Artificial Intelligence course from Stanford University. Despite her busy responsibilities as an anesthesiologist and NMC department registrar, she successfully pursued the program through dedicated study. Dr. Megha has also recently entered Kannada literature as a poet. Her training in AI is expected to help improve disease diagnosis, data analysis, and affordable healthcare services. CMCRI Dean and Director Dr. B. Y. Yuvaraj and college staff congratulated her, calling the achievement a proud moment for the institution and its academic community.

No shortage of domestic cooking gas cylinders

Chikkaballapura

Deputy Commissioner G. Prabhu clarified that there is no shortage of domestic cooking gas cylinders in the district, countering social media rumors. As of March 12, 11,355 cylinders are available. The District Collector urged consumers not to panic or believe false reports. Taluk-level teams have been formed to monitor illegal stockpiling, diversion for commercial use, or misuse of domestic cylinders. Any violations will be dealt with strictly under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955. Authorities emphasized that regular supply continues as before, assuring households of uninterrupted access to cooking gas while maintaining strict vigilance against illegal practices.

Nine Odisha Congress MLAs shifted to resort

Under Bhakta Charan Das, Odisha MLAs stayed in K'taka resorts until elections, planning to return to Odisha afterward

RAMANAGARA

Nine legislators of the Indian National Congress from Odisha have been shifted to a private resort in Bidadi amid fears of "Operation Kamala" ahead of the upcoming Rajya Sabha elections in India scheduled for March 16.

The MLAs arrived in Bengaluru from Bhubaneswar late Thursday night and were later taken to a resort in Bidadi. Party sources said the move was taken to prevent possible cross-voting during the Rajya Sabha elections.

The legislators came to Karnataka under the leadership of Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee president Bhakta Charan Das. Reports said the MLAs will remain in the resort until the elections and are expected to return to Odisha later.

Out of the 14 Congress MLAs in Odisha, nine have currently reached Bengaluru. Meanwhile, the Bharatiya Janata Party has extended support to independent candidate Dilip Ray in the Rajya Sabha election. A candidate requires 30 preferential votes to win the seat.

Political sources said the Congress leadership fears attempts to influence some legislators. Therefore, the MLAs were moved to a resort to ensure unity within the party during the voting process. More legislators are expected to arrive later in the day.

Local Congress leaders in Karnataka have arranged transport from the airport to the resort. Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar is also expected to visit the resort and hold discussions with the MLAs regarding the election strategy. Among those who arrived are Praful Chandra Pradhan, Satyajeet Gomag, Dr. C.S. Rajen Pakka, Pavitra Sawant, Ashok Kumar Das, Neelamadha Aikak, Appal Swamy and Mangu Khilla, along with party functionaries accompanying them.

Centre assures help for distressed tobacco farmers

HUNSUR

Led by H. D. Deve Gowda and H. D. Kumaraswamy, the delegation highlighted falling tobacco prices in Mysuru and Hassan, causing financial stress for thousands of farming families

The Central Government has assured support to tobacco farmers in Karnataka who are facing serious financial problems due to a sharp fall in market prices. The assurance came after a delegation of leaders met Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal in New Delhi and discussed the issue in detail.

The delegation was led by former Prime Minister H. D. Deve Gowda and Union Minister H. D. Kumaraswamy. After the meeting, MLA G. T. Harish Gowda said the minister listened carefully to the concerns raised by leaders about the difficult situation faced by tobacco growers.

During the discussion, the delegation explained that tobacco prices have dropped heavily in many regions of Karnataka, including Mysuru and Hassan. Because of this, farmers are unable to recover the money they spent on growing the crop. Thousands of farming families are now struggling with financial stress and uncertainty.

Leaders urged the Central Government to take immediate steps to protect farmers from unfair market practices. They requested the government to ensure fair prices for tobacco crops, prevent monopoly and price manipulation in the market, and provide financial support to farmers who are suffering losses.

Responding to the request, Minister Piyush Goyal assured the delegation that the government is committed to protecting farmers' interests. He said the issue would be examined in detail with the Tobacco Board and other concerned authorities. Necessary steps will be taken soon so that farmers receive fair treatment and better prices for their produce.

Several leaders and public representatives were also part of the delegation. They expressed hope that the government's intervention will bring relief to tobacco growers and help improve their financial condition soon.

Magadi town set for major infrastructure upgrade

MAGADI

Magadi town is expected to receive major infrastructure improvements in the coming months, according to MLA H. C. Balakrishna. The legislator expressed confidence that ongoing development works will soon transform the town with better roads and modern facilities. Balakrishna spoke to reporters after inspecting road asphalting work on RR Road and development activities at Kempegowda Circle. He said the asphalting of important roads in the town is progressing quickly. The white-topping work on the road from Gandhi Nagar Circle to the private bus stand is also underway and expected to be completed soon.

The MLA said several key circles in the town will be modernized as part of the development plan. These include Gandhi Circle, Someshwara Circle, Hospet Circle, Dr. Shivakumaraswamyji Circle and Kempegowda Circle. The project aims to improve traffic movement and enhance the overall appearance of the town.

Balakrishna appealed to residents for patience during the construction period. With road, sewer and bridge works taking place in different parts of the town, temporary inconvenience such as dust and traffic disruption is unavoidable. He said the public's cooperation for the next three to four months will help authorities complete the works quickly.

Responding to questions about installing a statue of Kempe Gowda near Kempegowda Circle, the MLA said a final decision will be taken after consulting members of the development committee.

The CEO directed engineers to coordinate with gram panchayats, identify summer water issues, implement precautions

MANDYA OFFICIALS REVIEW DRINKING WATER SUPPLY PLANS

MANDYA

Chief Executive Officer of the Zilla Panchayat Nandini K. R. has directed officials to ensure uninterrupted and safe drinking water supply in rural areas, especially during the approaching summer season.

She gave the instructions while presiding over the District Water and Sanitation Committee meeting held at the Zilla Panchayat hall in Mandya. Officials of the Rural Drinking Water and Sanitation Department were asked to take necessary steps to provide sufficient and quality drinking water to villagers and prevent shortages.

The CEO instructed engineers to work closely with gram panchayats and identify villages that may face water problems during summer. She said precautionary measures should be taken in advance to avoid any disruption in water supply. An action plan for urgent works was also discussed in the meeting and approval was sought according to government guidelines.

Funds have been allocated for several urgent works not covered under the Jal Jeevan Mission. These include repairing overhead tanks, installing ladders and fencing, repairing pure drinking water units, installing bulk meters, setting up chlorination units for borewells and purchasing electrofusion machines. Officials were asked to implement these works strictly according to rules.

Nandini K.R. also instructed that coordination meetings on drinking water issues should be held every Monday at the taluk level. Tahsildars, Executive Officers and Assistant Executive Engineers must discuss local problems and report the steps taken to resolve them.

She further directed engineers to personally inspect multi-village drinking water supply projects and ensure proper maintenance. Clean drinking water units should be checked regularly and repaired immediately if they stop functioning. Officials and engineers from different departments attended the meeting.

Siddaganga Mutt serves thousands using traditional wood stoves

TUMAKURU

Even as concerns grow across the country over a possible shortage of LPG cylinders due to tensions in the Middle East, the renowned Siddaganga Mutt continues its massive food service without relying on cooking gas. The mutt prepares meals for nearly 30,000 people every day using traditional wood stoves.

Around 9,000 children living in the mutt are served three meals daily, including rice, sambar and ragi mudde. Cooking has been done using firewood for many years, making the mutt largely independent of LPG supply. This traditional system has helped maintain uninterrupted food service even during the current concerns about gas availability.

Speaking about the global tensions, the mutt's seer Sri Shivakumar Siddalinga Swamiji expressed hope that the war situation will end soon. He said prolonged conflict could force people to cut trees for firewood if fuel shortages worsen. Apart from resident students, thousands of visitors and travellers also receive meals daily at the mutt. The kitchen uses large wood-fired boilers to produce steam for cooking rice and sambar efficiently. Solar energy is also used in the evening for preparing certain meals. In addition, dried areca nut husks and other natural materials are collected and used as fuel. This sustainable practice ensures that the mutt's long-standing tradition of free food service continues smoothly for everyone.

Rotary distributes free cows to empower women

MAGADI

The Rotary Club has launched a social initiative to support poor women in rural areas by distributing free dairy cows to improve their livelihoods. Rotary Magadi Central President Manjunath Betageri said the program aims to help women become financially independent through dairy farming.

Speaking after distributing 10 cows near the Someshwara Temple in Magadi town, he said the initiative is part of the "Global Grant" program implemented jointly by Rotary Magadi Central and the Ullalu Rotary Club. The project began three years ago during the tenure of former Rotary President Prabhakar and has continued successfully since then. More than 110 cows have already been distributed to deserving women across Magadi taluk. Beneficiaries are selected carefully, focusing on poor women who own at least half to one acre of land and have space to raise cattle.

Officials said the scheme has received a positive response as many rural women are earning income through milk production. Rotary members regularly visit the beneficiaries' homes to ensure proper care of the animals.

Former president Prabhakar said a large-scale dairy promotion program has been launched this year. Around 300 cows have been distributed so far, including 63 in Magadi taluk. Plans are also underway to distribute 110 cows in Kolar district next week and another 90 cows later in Magadi.

Veterinary experts examine the cows before distribution to ensure quality and avoid fraud in milk yield claims. If a cow delays calving, the Rotary Foundation will provide ₹3,000 support for fodder and maintenance.

Rotary leaders said the program especially supports widows, poor families, and women raising disabled children, helping them gain stable income and dignity.

Laparoscopic surgeon Palanivelu receives lifetime achievement award

TUMAKURU

Renowned laparoscopic and robotic surgeon C. Palanivelu was honoured with the "M.R. Hulinaykar Lifetime Achievement Award" at a special ceremony held at the auditorium of Sridevi Medical College and Research Hospital in Tumakuru. The event was jointly organized by the Sri Sridevi Charitable Trust and the Dr. M. R. Hulinaykar Foundation.

Speaking after receiving the award, Dr. Palanivelu said India can become a leading nation if people use their skills and time wisely. He noted that many people waste valuable time on social media and advised the youth to focus on productive work and learning. According to him, dedication and discipline can help individuals achieve great success in life.

Dr. Palanivelu has performed around 18,000 laparoscopic and robotic surgeries and has received several honours in different countries. He said receiving the lifetime award from the Sridevi Institute was special and increased his sense of responsibility towards society.

During the event, Eeshwar R. Hosamani recalled his long association with the surgeon and praised his contribution to modern surgery. He said Dr. Palanivelu's work has helped make Coimbatore a well-known centre for advanced surgical treatment.

Founder of the Sridevi educational institutions M. R. Hulinaykar said honouring Dr. Palanivelu brought pride to the institution and inspired young doctors.

The award included a cash prize of ₹1.5 lakh and recognition for his outstanding service to the medical field. Several doctors, scholars and guests attended the program and appreciated his remarkable achievements in surgery and medical education.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

Women Learn Self-Defense Through Karate

MANDYA

A special self-defense karate training program was organized for college students at the University of Agricultural Sciences V.C. Farm as part of the celebrations of International Women's Day. The program was conducted jointly by the district administration, Zilla Panchayat Mandya and the Department of Skill Development with support from various departments.

The event was inaugurated by Zilla Panchayat Chief Executive Officer K. R. Nandini, who highlighted the importance of self-defense training for women. She said women are a strong part of society and their safety and confidence must be protected. Learning self-defense skills like karate can increase courage, discipline and physical strength among girls.

During the program, students demonstrated different karate techniques, including tile-breaking exercises, as part of the training session. Officials said such activities help women learn how to protect themselves during dangerous situations and improve their confidence in daily life.

Speaking at the event, Deputy Commissioner Dr. Kumar said International Women's Day should not be limited to one-day celebrations. He stressed the need to address women's problems throughout the year and create more opportunities for their safety and empowerment.

Vice Chancellor K. C. Narayanaswamy also appreciated the initiative and said training in arts like karate helps girls become confident and fearless in society.

Karate trainer Ashalatha and several district officials attended the event. Students of the university actively participated and learned practical self-defense techniques aimed at improving their safety, health and overall confidence.

QUICK READ

Koppal Sports Department launches summer training camp

KOPPAL

The Youth Empowerment and Sports Department has announced a summer training camp at Koppal District Stadium to promote fitness and sports among all age groups. Children, men, and women can receive coaching in swimming, athletics, volleyball, gym, shuttle badminton, chess, table tennis, and karate for a fixed fee. The program aims to develop interest and skills in sports while encouraging a healthy lifestyle. Interested participants can register at the Assistant Director's office, Youth Empowerment and Sports Department, District Stadium, Gadag Road, Koppal, or call 08539-230121 for details, officials said.

Power disruption scheduled in Karwar subdivision

KARWAR

HESCOM has announced a planned power outage in the Karwar sub-division on March 14 from 9:30 am to 6 pm due to conductor replacement work on the Keravadi feeder. The maintenance is aimed at ensuring safer and more reliable electricity supply to the area. The Assistant Executive Engineer (V), Operations and Maintenance Department, requested residents and businesses to cooperate during the scheduled disruption. Consumers are advised to avoid using electrical appliances during the outage and take necessary precautions. Power will be restored as soon as the maintenance work is completed, officials said.

Gram Panchayat administrators attend training workshop

MANDYA

A training workshop for Gram Panchayat administrators was held at Kaveri Hall, Zilla Panchayat, Mandya. Officials provided detailed guidance on Panchayat Raj responsibilities, tax collection, and citizen grievance management. Administrators were urged to address public complaints promptly, spend at least two days a week in their Gram Panchayats, and ensure proper action on e-asset applications. Awards will be given to administrators excelling in water, sanitation, and public service. Departments including Rural Housing, 15th Finance Commission, Swachh Bharat Mission, and Jal Jeevan Mission briefed attendees on programs.

Mandya plans ahead to prevent summer water crisis

Dr. Kumar emphasized planning to prevent water shortages until June and conducting regular inspections to ensure safe water quality

MANDYA

Deputy Commissioner Dr. Kumar has directed officials to take necessary steps to ensure that drinking water does not become a problem in the district during the summer months.

He issued the instructions while addressing taluk-level officials through a video conference held at the District Commissioner's office. The meeting reviewed the availability of drinking water and cattle fodder in the district and discussed precautions to deal with rising temperatures.

Dr. Kumar said that proper planning should be done to ensure that residents face no shortage of safe drinking water until June. He added that regular inspections must be carried out to check the quality of water being supplied to the public.

According to officials, the Krishnarajasagar Reservoir currently has around 33 TMC of water. The district needs about 2 TMC of water each month for drinking purposes. Even after supplying water for agricultural activities, sufficient water is expected to remain available until the end of June.

The Deputy Commissioner instructed officials to prepare a list of villages that faced drinking water shortages in the last two years and identify areas that may face similar issues this year. Preventive steps should be taken in those villages to ensure continuous water supply.

He also directed task force committees in each taluk to monitor drinking water systems and maintain proper sanitation in lakes to prevent contamination.

Officials informed the meeting that the district has 968 lakes and most of them currently hold water. Adequate cattle fodder is also available in the district for several months, ensuring no immediate shortage for livestock.

Chilkunda Ravi urged SC recognition for Madiwala community, noting past recommendations and reports remain unacted upon by successive governments

Madiwala community demands Scheduled Caste inclusion

HUNSUR

The Hunsur Madiwala Sangha has announced a day-night protest at Freedom Park, Bangalore, starting at 8 am on March 16, 2026, demanding that the Madiwala community be included in the Scheduled Caste (SC) list.

Speaking at an impromptu press conference at the city's Journalists' Association office, Taluk Madiwala Sangha President Chilkunda Ravi said the community seeks access to social, educational, economic, and political facilities. "The Madiwala community has already been recognized as SC in 18 states and three union territories, which has helped them progress socially, economically, and educationally," he added.

He recalled that in 1921, the Maharaja of Mysore had recommended SC inclusion for the community during a round-table meeting. Later, in 2011, a study conducted under BS Yediyurappa's government produced a report on this inclusion. "However, no subsequent government has acted on it," he said.

The protest will be supported by Basava Machideva Swamiji Machideva Maha Sansthan Math, Chitradurga, and various Madiwala organizations. The Karnataka State Madiwala Welfare Development Association has received letters of support from 19 ministers and 137 MLAs, totaling 156 letters endorsing the Prof. Dr. Annapurna report. Requests have also been submitted to the Chief Minister, Chief Secretary, and Social Welfare Minister.

Other office bearers present at the press meet included General Secretary Raghu, Treasurer Ganesh Chandrahas, Bilikere Hobli President Shekhar, and Coordinator Shivanand. The Sangha urged the government to implement the long-pending report without further delay.

International women's day celebration with health camp

CHITRADURGA

Chitradurga District is all set to celebrate International Women's Day on Saturday, March 14. The event is being organized jointly by the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, and Women and Child Development Department under the Mission Shakti and Beti Bachao Beti Padhao initiatives.

The main function will begin at 11:00 am at the District Valmiki Bhavan near Madakari Circle. As part of the celebration, a free health checkup camp has been arranged for women and former Devadasis to ensure their well-being.

The program will be inaugurated by Planning and Statistics Minister D. Sudhakar, who is also the district incharge. Many dignitaries are expected, including T. Raghumurthy, MLA and chairman of the State Small Industries Development Corporation.

CHIKKABALLAPUR HOSTS WOMEN'S SPORTS MEET CELEBRATION

CHIKKABALLAPUR

Chikkaballapur district will host a special women's sports meet on March 16 at 10:30 am at the Sir M. Visvesvaraya District Stadium to celebrate International Women's Day. The event is organized jointly by the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, and the Youth Empowerment and Sports Department.

The program will be inaugurated by Higher Education Minister and District Incharge Minister Dr. M.C. Sudhakar and presided over by Chikkaballapur MLA P.E. Pradeep Easwar.

DC pushes fast completion of MIMS works

MANDYA

The Deputy Commissioner has directed officials to complete pending infrastructure works at the Mandya Institute of Medical Sciences (MIMS) as soon as possible to improve healthcare services for the public.

The instructions were given during a review meeting held to assess the progress of ongoing development works at the medical institute. Officials were asked to speed up all remaining projects so that better facilities can be provided to patients and medical students.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner instructed MIMS authorities to start the Cancer Care Center, which has already been constructed with the required infrastructure and equipment. Starting the center quickly will help provide advanced treatment to cancer patients in the region.To modernize the attendance system for students, officials were also asked to install face recognition biometric devices. This new system is expected to improve monitoring and maintain accurate attendance records in the institution.

The Deputy Commissioner further directed officials to increase the electrical load capacity of the institute from 350 kV to 650 kV to meet the growing power needs of the hospital and medical college.

Engineering officers of the Karnataka Health and Family Welfare Department were also instructed to prepare estimates for upgrading the casualty and minor operation theatre units. Drainage system and internal road works at the teaching hospital are currently being carried out using corporate social responsibility funds of about ₹5 crore. Officials were told to submit estimates for the remaining works quickly.

Kalaburagi District HPV vaccination campaign launched

KALABURAGI

Dr. Kyathanal stated free HPV vaccines for 14–15-year-old girls are available at hospitals and health centers, urging all eligible girls to prevent cervical cancer.

Kalaburagi District Health and Family Welfare Officer Dr. Sharanabasappa Kyathanal launched the district-level HPV vaccination campaign on Friday at Kalaburagi City Health Center ICDS. The program aims to protect girls from cervical cancer and create a healthier future.

Dr. Kyathanal said the HPV vaccine is being given free of cost to girls aged 14 to 15. Vaccinations are available daily at the District Hospital (GIMS) and all taluka public hospitals. In addition, community health centers, primary health centers, and city health centers will provide the vaccine every Wednesday and Friday.

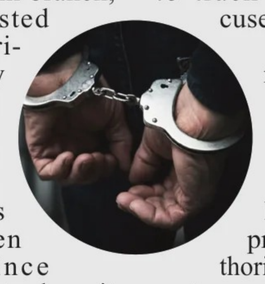
Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer among women in India. "The Government of India and the Karnataka Government have taken a major step to prevent this disease. All eligible girls should take full advantage of the HPV vaccination," he said.

District RCH Officer Dr. Sidramappa Patil explained that HPV stands for 'Human Papilloma Virus', a virus that causes genital infections and is the main cause of cervical cancer in women. He urged parents to ensure their daughters get vaccinated on time.

The program was attended by CCT Program Control Officer Dr. Vivekananda Reddy, UGC Council Member Dr. Sudha Halkai, Taluka Health Officer Dr. Maruti Kamble, Kalaburagi South Zone Field Education Officer Vijayakumar Jamkhandi, and City Health Center Administrative Medical Officer Dr. Veena Kalapura. District and taluka officials, Urban Health Center staff, ASHA workers, and girls under 15 also participated. Officials stressed that early vaccination is key to preventing cervical cancer and called on the public to support the campaign.

Hunsur employee arrested for misappropriating customer funds

HUNSUR



Suvas, son of Singayya from Gouripur village, working as an SM grade employee at the Hunsur Indus Sand Bank branch, has been arrested for misappropriating money collected from customers.

The accused collected weekly payments from about ten customers since April but failed to deposit the funds with the company or provide receipts to the clients.

Cheated customers filed a complaint at the Hunsur city police station. Acting on the complaint, Circle Inspector Santosh Kashyap and PSI Tajuddin HC formed a special team, led by officers Arun Raja, Ratnam Arun, and Irfan, to track down the accused.

The team interrogated Suvas and recovered the funds. He was handed over to the police for legal proceedings. Authorities have assured customers that strict action will be taken and urged all financial institutions to ensure proper documentation and receipts when collecting payments to prevent such incidents in the future.

PREVENT CHILD MARRIAGE

Hunsur women urged to prioritize health

HUNSUR

During Women's Day celebrations organized by the Karnataka Dalit Sangharsh Samiti and the Dalit Women's Union at Gurugal Katte, Hunsur, health and empowerment of women were highlighted as key to strong families and society.

Dr. Sujatha, a pediatrician at the city government hospital, advised women to focus on healthy food habits, regular exercise, and meditation. "Kitchens should be like small hospitals, preventing illness rather than depending entirely on medical facilities," she said. She also emphasized the importance of preventing child marriages and female foeticide, warning that such practices harm society and are punishable by law.

The program included the inauguration of electricity in the house of Parvathamma, a poor woman, and felicitation of four women for their contributions.

Dr. Sujatha added, "If women are healthy, families are healthy; and if families are healthy, society flourishes. We must embrace love, tolerance, and compassion instead of anger or jealousy."

Municipal Commissioner Manasa encouraged women to overcome feelings of helplessness and cited Savitribai Phule, who educated deprived communities despite resistance, as an inspiring example.

Municipal Environmental Engineer Soumya spoke on women's responsibility in shaping children into good citizens.

CH CLASSIFIEDS
To place a classified ad contact: 080-41209042

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **Sri Nandish. Gowda H**. Son of Sri Siddegowda, aged about 38 years, residing at: Honniganahalli village, Bannimukkodlu Post, Kodihalli Hobli, Kanakapura taluk, Bangalore South district, I am a permanent resident of the above village. In all my documents such as Aadhar Card No.: 9649 9550 8271, PAN Card No.: PVHPS0120Q, Ration Card No.: 290200183099 and Voter ID Card and Bank Accounts, my name is **Satyananda H. S.** But as per my horoscope, Satyananda H. S. is not suitable for me, now I have changed my name to **Nandish. Gowda H**. Therefore, in all my above documents and in all my transactions, I have changed my name to **Nandish. Gowda H.** instead of **Satyananda H. S.** From now on, my name is **Nandish. Gowda H.**
I have certified before Kanakapura Notary H. L. Ashoka on 11-03-2026.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, PREMAKUMARI B M W/o SHASHIKANT DAMBAL, R/o No 9, 1st Floor, PSR Pavillion Apartments, Guddadhahalli Main Road, Hebbal, Bangalore North, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560024, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as PREMA S DAMBAL.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, GAURESH KUMAR S/o YOGENDRA PRASAD SINGH, R/o Villa no 71, Himagiri Urban Woods, Mahal Chowdadenahalli, Bengaluru, Karnataka-562125, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as GAURESH SINGH.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, VINAY KUMAR S R S/o S S RAJANNA R/o 17, 1st Main, 1st Cross, Near Garden School, Kempegowda Nagar, T Dasarahalli, Bangalore North, Bangalore, Karnataka 560057, have changed the name of my minor son CHIRAAG S V aged 13 years and he shall hereafter be known as RESHANK V.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, MOHAMMED SAHIL HUSSEIN ASSADI S/o SAJJADH HUSSEIN ASSADI, R/o No 601, Tara Apartment, Infantry Road, Bangalore G.P.O, Bangalore North, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560001, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as SAHIL ASSADI.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, MAMATA W/o SHARANAPPA NADAGATTI, R/o Indira Nagar, Afzalpur, Afjalpur, Kalaburagi, Karnataka-585301, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as PARVATI.

CHANGE OF NAME

It is for general information that I, K SUGANTHI D/o KOTHANDAM and W/o Late B. KAMALA KANNAN , R/o No 50, Jayanthi Nivas, 1st Cross, Sri Ganga Parameshwari Layout, Margondanahalli, Bangalore North, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560036, declare that my husband expired on 08/05/2010, vide death certificate No. COC/2010/01/001/000163/0. Further, I remarried with N PRAVEEN vide marriage certificate No. KRI-HM1262-2016-17, dated 23/03/2017. I have changed the name of my minor son namely MONISH. K, aged 15 years and he shall may be known as P MONISH. Further, the name of the father of my son may be known as N PRAVEEN in future for all purposes.

Mohan Yadav Transfers ₹1,836 Crore to 1.25 Cr Women Under Ladli Behna Yojana

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Friday transferred ₹1,836 crore into the bank accounts of more than 1.25 crore women beneficiaries under the Ladli Behna Yojana.

BHOPAL

The financial assistance was transferred through a single click by the Chief Minister during the programme, which witnessed the presence of Union Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, who also represents the Guna constituency in Parliament.

The Ladli Behna Yojana was launched by the BJP-led Madhya Pradesh government in June 2023 to provide direct financial support to women aged between 23 and 60 years. Initially, beneficiaries received ₹1,000 per month directly into their bank accounts. The amount was later increased to ₹1,250 per month in September 2023 and further raised to ₹1,500 per month in November 2025 as part of the government's efforts to strengthen women's financial independence. Addressing the gathering, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav reiterated the government's commitment to expanding the scheme and improving the welfare of women in the state. He recalled that the state government plans to gradually increase the monthly assistance to ₹3,000 by the year 2028.

According to official data, the state government has so far transferred more than ₹55,976 crore to beneficiaries under the scheme, including the latest instalment of ₹1,836 crore released on Friday.

During the event, the Chief Minister also interacted with several women beneficiaries to understand how they utilise the ₹1,500 monthly support. Many beneficiaries reportedly shared that the assistance helps them manage household expenses, children's education, and small savings. Beyond financial assistance, the state government is also planning to link women registered under the scheme with skill development programmes, employment opportunities, and avenues for self-employment. Officials said the initiative aims to help women become self-reliant and play a stronger role in the economic progress of their families and communities.

No Shortage of Fertilisers During Kharif 2025 and Rabi 2025–26, Says JP Nadda

NEW DELHI

Addressing Parliament, Nadda stated that fertiliser production and supply have remained stable, ensuring farmers have timely access to essential agricultural inputs. He highlighted that urea production by units of Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited reached 41,24,000 metric tonnes during the April–January period of the financial year 2025–26. This marks an increase from 40,66,000 metric tonnes produced during the same period in FY 2024–25, indicating steady growth in domestic fertiliser output.

The minister also referred to government initiatives aimed at strengthening India's fertiliser sector. He noted that the Centre introduced the New Investment Policy 2012 on January 2, 2013, and later amended it on October 7, 2014. The policy was designed to encourage fresh investment in the urea sector and enhance India's self-sufficiency in fertiliser production.

Under the policy, six new urea manufacturing units have been commissioned across the country. Four of these facilities were established through joint venture companies formed by nominated public sector undertakings, while two units were set up by private sector companies.

M'rashtra Introduces Freedom of Religion Bill 2026 to Curb Forced Conversions

MUMBAI

The Bill was tabled in the state assembly by Minister of State for Rural Development Pankaj Bhoyar. It outlines a regulatory framework aimed at ensuring that religious conversions take place only through an individual's free will and without any form of coercion or manipulation.

According to the provisions of the Bill, any individual intending to convert to another religion must submit a declaration of intent to the district authorities at least 60 days in advance. This advance notice requirement is intended to allow authorities to verify that the conversion is voluntary and not influenced by fraud, force, or inducement.

After the conversion takes place, the individual must officially register the change of religion within 25 days with the competent authority for it to be legally recognised. The legislation also provides a mechanism for family members to raise concerns. Blood relatives of the person undergoing conversion will be allowed to file a complaint if they suspect the process involved coercion, undue influence, or material inducement.

The government of Maharashtra on Friday introduced the Maharashtra Freedom of Religion Bill, 2026 in the state assembly with the objective of preventing religious conversions carried out through force, fraud, or inducement.

The proposed law contains strict provisions to deal with organisations involved in illegal conversions. Section 14 of the Bill empowers the state government to ban and impose fines on institutions or groups found guilty of facilitating or funding unlawful conversions. Further, Section 9 outlines the criminal penalties for offenders. Individuals convicted under the law may face rigorous imprisonment of up to seven years along with a monetary penalty of up to ₹5 lakh. The Bill also states that conversions carried out through allurement, misrepresentation, force, coercion, or other fraudulent means will be prohibited. It proposes a clear administrative process that includes prior declaration before conversion and post-conversion verification involving the individual, the person facilitating the conversion, and any institution associated with it. Additionally, investigations into alleged unlawful conversions will be conducted by a police officer not below the rank of Sub-Inspector, ensuring a formal legal process in handling such cases.

Krishi Kumbh 2026 Features Modern Farming and Digital Tools

NASHIK

The event is serving as a major knowledge-sharing platform where farmers are being introduced to modern cultivation techniques, improved seed varieties, efficient irrigation methods and advanced agricultural machinery. Several stalls, exhibitions and technical guidance sessions have been organised, allowing participants to interact directly with experts and learn about practical solutions to improve crop yields and farm profitability.

Officials said Krishi Kumbh plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between agricultural research and farmers by enabling them to understand new developments in farming technologies and adopt them effectively in their fields.

Sub-Divisional Agriculture Officer Batu Patil said the event has witnessed strong participation from farmers and visitors across the region this year. He noted that a special attraction at the exhibition is the display of multiple grape varieties aimed at promoting export-oriented cultivation.

This year's Krishi Kumbh is special as we are seeing a large inflow of people. We have also displayed 14 types of export varieties of grapes here at our stall, Patil said.

According to officials, the Agriculture Department of Maharashtra is actively promoting scientific and modern farming practices through initiatives such as Krishi Kumbh. The government aims to encourage farmers to adopt advanced techniques that can help increase agricultural productivity and improve income levels.

Alongside physical exhibitions, the department has also introduced a digital initiative designed to provide farmers with easy access to critical agricultural information. The MahaVISTAAR-AI mobile application has been launched to deliver multiple services to farmers on a single digital platform.

Circle Agriculture Officer of Pimpalgaon Baswant Manoj Dilip Runte explained that the app allows farmers to check the latest market prices of crops, receive information about suitable crops for specific districts and understand crop conditions and strength.

Runte added that the application also features a fertiliser quantity calculator, enabling farmers to estimate the correct amount of fertiliser required according to the size of their land. Officials believe such digital tools, combined with awareness programmes like Krishi Kumbh, can significantly strengthen the adoption of technology-driven agriculture across the state.

सेन्ट्रल बैंक ऑफ़ इंडिया
Central Bank of India

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All the customers of **HSR Layout Branch** are requested to make their transactions from **16.03.2026** in the above mentioned premises.

Special note: The HSR Layout Branch Locker customers are requested to operate the locker facility in the above mentioned premises from **16.03.2026. Inconvenience caused is regretted.**

Place: Bangalore
Date: 13.03.2026

Sd/- Authorised Officer,
Central Bank of India

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ
ಕಾರ್ಯನಿರ್ವಾಹಕ ಇಂಜನೀಯರರು, ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ ಇಲಾಖೆ, ವಿಭಾಗ ಕಾರವಾರ

ಸಂ: ಕಾ.ನಿ.ಇಂ./ಲೋ.ಇ.ವಿ.ಕಾ/ಪಿ.ಬಿ–1/ಟೆಂಡರ–38/2025–26/5811 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 12–03–2026

ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆ ಆಹ್ವಾನ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ (ಇ–ಪ್ರಕ್ಯೂರಮೆಂಟ್)

ಅರ್ಹ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರಿಂದ ಈ ಕೆಳಗಿನ ಕೋಷ್ಟಕದಲ್ಲಿ ವಿವರಿಸಿರುವ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳಿಗಾಗಿ ಕಾರ್ಯನಿರ್ವಾಹಕ ಇಂಜನೀಯರರು, ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ ಇಲಾಖೆ ವಿಭಾಗ, ಕಾರವಾರ ಇವರಿಂದ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರು ಕೋಷ್ಟಕದಲ್ಲಿ ಕೊಟ್ಟಿರುವ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಯ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆಯನ್ನು ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರಮೆಂಟ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಮಾತ್ರ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವದು. ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆಯನ್ನು ವಹಿಸಲು ಅರ್ಹರಾಗಬೇಕಾದಲ್ಲಿ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರು (ಕೆಡಬ್ಲೂ–1, 2 & 3) ರಲ್ಲಿ ನಿಗದಿಪಡಿಸಿರುವ ಷರತ್ತುಗಳನ್ನು ಗಮನಿಸುವದು.

(1) ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆಗೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದ ವಿಚಾರಣೆಗೆ ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿ: 20–03–2026 16.30 ಗಂಟೆವರೆಗೆ (2) ಟೆಂಡರನ್ನು ಸ್ವೀಕರಿಸುವ ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿ: 23–03–2026 16.30 ಗಂಟೆವರೆಗೆ (3) ಟೆಂಡರನ ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿ: 24–03–2026 17.00 ಗಂಟೆವರೆಗೆ (4) ಟೆಂಡರನ ಆರ್ಥಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿ: 25–03–2026 17.00 ಗಂಟೆವರೆಗೆ

ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಯ ಹೆಸರು: ಲೆಕ್ಕ ಶೀರ್ಷಿಕೆ: **Mitigation- 8443-Deposite Contribution During 2025-26 ವರ್ಕ ಇಂಡೆಂಟ್: (1) PWD/2025-26/FP/WORK_INDENT34045 (2) PWD/2025-26/FP/WORK_INDENT34117 (3) PWD/2025-26/FP/WORK_INDENT34048**

ಲೆಕ್ಕ ಶೀರ್ಷಿಕೆ: **3054-MDR Maintenance during 2025-26 ವರ್ಕ ಇಂಡೆಂಟ್: (1) PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT33221**

ಲೆಕ್ಕ ಶೀರ್ಷಿಕೆ: **3054- SH Bridge Maintenance during 2025-26 ವರ್ಕ ಇಂಡೆಂಟ್: (1) PWD/2025-26/BG/WORK_INDENT28098**

(ಕೆಡಬ್ಲೂ–1, 2 & 3) ರಲ್ಲಿನ ನಿಭಂದನೆಗಳನ್ನು ಮುಂದಿನ ದಿನಗಳಲ್ಲಿ **e-proc** ನಲ್ಲಿ ಸೂಚಿಸಲಾದ ನಿಭಂದನೆಗಳನ್ನು ಇಲಾಖಾ ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಅಂದರೆ **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** ನೋಡಬಹುದು. ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾಹಿತಿಗಾಗಿ **help desk Bangalore (Phone No. 918025501216 & 918025501227)** ಇವರನ್ನು ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸಬಹುದು.

ಸಹಿ/– ಕಾರ್ಯನಿರ್ವಾಹಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರರು,
ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ ಇಲಾಖೆ, ವಿಭಾಗ, ಕಾರವಾರ

DIPR/KWR/KSMCA/1203/25-26 dt.13.03.2026

Government of Karnataka
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
MINOR IRRIGATION AND GROUND WATER DEVELOPMENT DIVISION,
KALABURAGI, e-mail: midnglb@rediffmail.com / midnglb1@gmail.com,Ph.08472 - 220196

IFT No. EE/MI &GWD D/KAL/PB-3/2025-26/ 5795 DATED : 10-03-2026

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION (IFT KW- 4)

1) Detail of Work : **THE EXEUCTIVE ENGINEER, M.I. & G.W.D. DIVISION, KALABURAGI INVITES TENDER FROM THE ELIGIBLE TENDERERS FOR THE WORK UNDER 4702 APB, FOR THE YEAR 2025-26,** 2) Amount of Estimate : **Rs. 39,59,22,463.84,** 3) Eligibility of Contractor : Class-I, 4) Details of Tender Application Amount and EMD Amount : Tender Fee As Per KPP Portal E.M.D. Rs.**39,60,000.00,** 5) Tender Publishing date : 12.03.2026, 6) Pre-Bid Meeting Date and Time : 25.03.2026 Up to 11.00 Hours, 7) Last Date & Time for Tender Queries/ Clarifications : 27.03.2026 Up to 11.00 Hours, 8) Last Date & Time for Receipt of Tenders : 30.03.2026 Up to 17.30 Hours, 9) Date & Time for Opening of Technical Bid : 01.04.2026 Up to 17.30 Hours, 10) Date & Time for Opening of Financial Bid : 02.04.2026 Up to 17.30 Hours, 11) Addl. information : Executive Engineer M.I. & G.W.D. Division, Kalaburagi 12) Address of E-Portal. : (https:// kppp.Karnataka.gov.in)

DIPR/Kalaburagi/1170/
Deshpande Publicity/2025-26

Sd/- Executive Engineer
Minor Irrigation and Ground Water Development Division, Kalaburagi

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GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, DAVANAGERE DIVI, DAVANAGERE.

No.EE:PWD:Dvg/JE:IFT-50:2025-26 Dated:- 13.03.2026

SHORT TERM E-TENDER NOTIFICATION

Ref : This office tender notification No. IFT-50/2025-26 dated : 13.03.2026.

The works under Head of Account 4059~80~051~0~60~132 CMIDP, 2 work Rs. 350.00 lakhs (W.I.31680-CALL-3), Rs. 100.00 lakhs (W.I.34337) and 3054-03-337-0-05-200 SH Maintenance 1 Works, Rs. 37.25 lakhs (W.I.33974) & 3054-04-337-1-10-200 MDR Maintenance 1 Works, Rs. 110.00 lakhs (W.I.33959) pertaining to Davanagere and Jagalur sub divisions under the Jurisdiction of PWD, Davanagere division, has been called for the tenders from registered Contractors in KPWD for the above works through KPP Portal as per standard tender documents rules. Tender dates are as mentioned below:

Details of dates	W.I 31680-CALL-3	W.I 34337	W.I.33974 & W.I.33959
1. Last Date & time for tender queries	Date 13.03.2026 Timing 4.00 P.M.	Date 17.03.2026 Timing 4.00 P.M.	Date 16.03.2026 Timing 4.00 P.M.
2. Prebid meeting held : office of Executive enginner, PWD division, Davanagere.	Date : 16.03.2026 Timing 11.30 A.M.	-	-
3. Last Date & time for receipt of tenders	Date : 27.03.2026 Timing 4.00 P.M.	Date : 24.03.2026 Timing 4.00 P.M.	Date : 23.03.2026 Timing 4.00 P.M.
4. Date & time for opening of Technical Bid :	Date : 31.03.2026 Timing 4.30 P.M.	Date : 25.03.2026 Timing 4.30 P.M.	Date : 24.03.2026 Timing 4.30 P.M.

Further details can be obtained from this office in office hours.

DIPR/CTA/KSMCA/819/2025-26

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Public Works Department Division, Davanagere

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CHAMUNDESHWARI ELECTRICITY SUPPLY CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
Corporate Office, Procurement Section, CESC, Mysuru-570017. Ph: 9448994705,
Email ID: gmpurc@cescmysore.org Website: www.cescmysore.org

No: CESC/GM(P)/TA to MD/2025-26/ 42323 Date: 12.03.2026

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION (KPP- PORTAL ONLY)

CESC, Mysore invites Short Term Tenders from eligible bidders to excute following work as mentioned below.

Sl No.	Material Name	Enquiry No/Date
1	Implementation of IoT based Wireless Smart office Automation for energy conservation in Corporate office building and MD home office, CESC, Mysore	C2-6480/12.03.2026

The details regarding participation in the tender can be obtained through e-procurement portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** on or after **16-03-2026.** For clarification contact help desk **+91-8046010000, +91-8068948777 or** e-mail address **support@eprochelpdesk.com.**

For Electricity related complaints Call: 1912

DIPR/MYSORE/1829/SSC/2025-26

Sd/- General Manager (Procurement) CESC, Mysuru.

VISVESVARAYA JALA NIGAMA LIMITED
(A Government of Karnataka Enterprise)
Regd. Office: Visvesvaraya Jala Nigam Limited No.148, Embassy Square, Ground Floor, Infantry Road, Bangalore - 560001,
CIN No: U41000KA2016SGC097260 Ph: 080-22256688/22289966
Fax: 080-22264477Email: mail@vjnl.in, Website: www.vjnl.in
Office of the Executive Engineer, Yettinahole Project Division No.4, Madhugiri, Tumkur Dist-572132 Ph: 08137-282112 Email-eeyetmadhugiri4@gmail.com

Sl No:EE/VINL/YHP/Div-No.4/Madhugiri/NIT- 14/2025-26 **Date: 07.03.2026**

Tender Notification: (Through KPP-Portal)

On Behalf of Managing Director, Visvesvaraya Jala Nigama Limited, Bangalore the Executive Engineer VJNL, Yettinahole Project Division No.4, Madhugiri, Karnataka invites two tender document system for a total of **03 works** of **Koratagere Constituency** amount **Rs.42.34 Lakhs to Rs.418.63 Lakhs** on "Percentage basis" through KPP-Portal. The contractor's can download and submit the completed bid documents through KPP-procurement website **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in** as per the dates mentioned below.

Sl. No	Calendar of Events	Dates for works less than 200 Lakhs	Dates for works more than 200 Lakhs
a.	The Contractor can have access to the e-tender document, i.e. the Tender Schedules, bid documents and other documents in the web site **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/#/portal/portal- home** on payment of transaction fee (non- refundable) from	12.03.2026 to 27.03.2026 up to 5.00 PM	12.03.2026 to 10.04.2026 up to 5.00 PM
b.	The Last date of Submission of completed Tender Documents through KPP-portal.	27.03.2026 up to 5.00 PM	10.04.2026 up to 5.00 PM
c.	Last date & time for tender Queries / Clarifications	18.03.2026 up to 3.00 PM	27.03.2026 up to 3.00 PM
d.	Pre-Bid Meeting at office of the Executive Engineer, VJNL, Yettinahole Project Division No.4, Madhugiri.	--	27.03.2026 at to 11.00 AM
e.	Date & Time of Opening of Technical by Executive Engineer, VJNL, Yettinahole Project Division No.4, Madhugiri.	01.04.2026 at 11.00 AM	15.04.2026 at 11.00 AM
f.	Date & Time of Opening of Financial bid by Executive Engineer, VJNL, Yettinahole Project Division No.4, Madhugiri.	After Approval of Technical Bid	After Approval of Technical Bid

The undersigned reserves all rights to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reasons.

DIPR/TUM/RO-303/25-26/Oysters

Sd/- Executive Engineer
VJNL, YHP, Division No.4, Madhugiri

HDFC securities | 25 YEARS
Powering India's Investments

HDFC SECURITIES LIMITED
Regd Office: Office Floor 8, I think Techno Campus Building B- Alpha, Kanjurmarg (E), Mumbai-400042.
(CIN No. U67120MH2000PLC152193)
Website: www.hdfcsec.com

Public Notice

This is to inform the public at large, that certain WhatsApp/Telegram/ Facebook/Instagram/LinkedIn and other social networking application based groups are wrongfully using the brand name, logo of HDFC Securities Limited (HSL) along with the names and pictures of senior officials of HSL to deceive the general public into believing that the group is associated with HSL.

Investors and general public are informed through this notice that HSL does not have any association and/or relation, directly or indirectly with such unauthorized groups in any capacity. HSL has identified an imposter named **'Sunita Agarwal'** who is falsely claiming association with HSL and Impersonating **MD & CEO Mr Dhiraj Relli,** operating through a WhatsApp Group **'[C-122] HDFC Securities Limited'** and the contact numbers associated are **'8951927031' & '8792862102'.** HSL will not be liable in any manner whatsoever of the financial losses and/or consequences of dealing with such above mentioned groups/individual. Please note that any person/s dealing with such name will be doing so at their own risk and responsibility.

Mumbai,
March 14, 2026

ಜಿಲ್ಲಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳ ಕಾರ್ಯಾಲಯ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ನಗರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು, (ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ನಗರಾಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಕೋಶ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು)
Email: ka.bengaluru.urban.dudc@gmail.com Phone: 08022211372/352

ಕ್ರ.ಸಂ. ಜಿನಕೋ/ತಾ.ಶಾ/ನಗರೋತ್ಥಾನ ಹಂತ–04/01/2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 13.03.2026

ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ನಗರಾಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಕೋಶ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ನಗರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಯಲ್ಲಿನ ಕೋನಪ್ಪನ ಅಗ್ರಹಾರ, ಹೆಬ್ಬಗೋಡಿ ನಗರಸಭೆ ಮತ್ತು ಜಿಗಣಿ ಪುರಸಭೆ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಅಮೃತ್ ನಗರೋತ್ಥಾನ ಹಂತ 4.0 ನಿಧಿ ಅನುದಾನದಡಿ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳನ್ನು ನಿರ್ವಹಿಸಲು ನೊಂದಾಯಿತ ಅರ್ಹ ದರ್ಜಿಯ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರಿಂದ ಮೊಹರಾದ ಕೆ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ. ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನ್ನು ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ.

ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳ ವಿವರ

ಕ್ರ. ಸಂ.	ಇಂಡೆಂಟ್ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ	ಅಂದಾಜು ಮೊತ್ತ (ರೂ.ಲಕ್ಷಗಳಲ್ಲಿ)	ವರ್ಗ
1.	DMA/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT53835/CALL-3	245.30	ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯ
2.	DMA/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT52693/CALL-3	212.44	ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯ
3	DMA/2025-26/WS/WORK_INDENT54077/CALL-2	216.79	ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯ

(1) ಆಕ್ಷೇಪಣೆ/ಮಾಹಿತಿಯನ್ನು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವ, ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗೆ ಅರ್ಜಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ, ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನ ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬಿಡ್‌ನ್ನು ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ ಮತ್ತು ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಆರ್ಥಿಕ ಬಿಡ್‌ನ್ನು ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕದ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ. (2) ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾಹಿತಿಯನ್ನು **KPPP** ನಲ್ಲಿ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ. (3) ದೂರವಾಣಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: **080–22211372/352** ಇ–ಮೇಲ್: **ka.bengaluru.urban.dudc@gmail.com**

ಸಹಿ/– ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರರು,
ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ನಗರಾಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಕೋಶ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ನಗರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ.

DIPR/CP/RO6248/AAPL/2025-26

QUICK READ

Gujarat CM distributes motorised tricycles, joystick wheelchairs

GANDHINAGAR

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel on Friday distributed motorised tricycles and joystick wheelchairs worth Rs 36.7 crore to 5,676 persons with disabilities across the state, aiming to improve mobility and reduce physical strain involved in daily travel. At a programme in Gandhinagar, the chief minister symbolically handed over the assistive devices to around 40 beneficiaries, while the remaining beneficiaries from 34 districts will receive them under the same initiative. The distribution includes motorised tricycles for 4,000 persons with disabilities and joystick-operated wheelchairs for 1,676 beneficiaries.

Insurance companies not giving full compensation to farmers

NEW DELHI

Congress Rajya Sabha member Rajeev Shukla on Friday raised the issue related to the crop insurance scheme for farmers in the House, saying insurance companies were not providing farmers with proper and full compensation. He said this was a critical issue as it impacted millions of farmers nationwide. Citing examples from several states, he highlighted serious flaws in the scheme. In Maharashtra, after the crops were damaged, the compensation was a meagre Rs 21 in some accounts, Rs 8 in others, and only Rs 3 in some cases. He said everyone has heard of the Prime Minister's Crop Insurance Scheme, which was launched with a significant objective.

Submit report on bureaucrats' absence during budget grants debate

MUMBAI

The Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Speaker Rahul Narwekar on Friday directed the Legislative Affairs Minister Chandrakant Patil to submit report on MArch 16 over the action taken against the Additional Chief Secretaries and Principal Secretaries who were not present during the discussion on budget grants on departments of urban development, social justice and special assistance, housing, tourism and cultural affairs and other backward classes welfare. The Speaker gave his directive after the NCP SP legislator and former minister Jayant Patil brought to the notice of the chair that, despite his earlier directions, none of the bureaucrats of the rank of additional chief secretary and principal secretary.

BJP, Shiv Sena Urge Public to Stay Calm Amid Energy Supply Concerns

Leaders from the BJP and Shiv Sena on Friday appealed to citizens to remain calm amid growing concerns about energy supplies

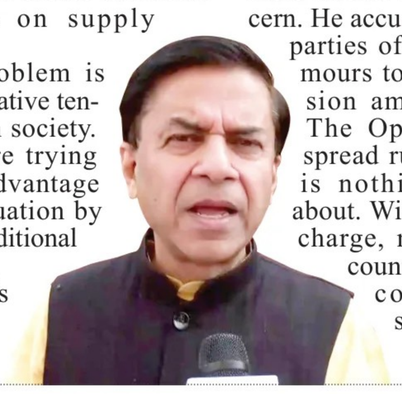
NEW DELHI

BJP MP Shashank Mani emphasised that the government is closely monitoring the situation and that India is better prepared compared to many other countries. Referring to remarks made by Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, Mani said the current challenges are part of a wider global issue affecting energy markets worldwide.

Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri has given a very responsible statement. This is a global issue affecting everyone worldwide. We have kept ourselves somewhat ahead because our stockpiles are adequate, Mani said.

He cautioned that speculative behaviour among citizens is contributing to unnecessary panic. According to him, some people are attempting to take advantage of the situation by purchasing extra LPG cylinders, which can create artificial pressure on supply chains.

The problem is the speculative tendencies in society. People are trying to take advantage of the situation by buying additional cylinders.



There is a problem, but please do not provoke people over it. You should also stand with the country; only then can we deal with this global issue, he added.

Another BJP MP, Ravi Kishan, also sought to reassure the public, stating that there was no reason for concern. He accused Opposition parties of spreading rumours to create confusion among citizens. The Opposition will spread rumours. There is nothing to worry about. With PM Modi in charge, no one in this country needs to be concerned, he said.

Shiv Sena MP Milind Deora echoed similar sentiments, noting that the government has already reiterated its commitment to ensuring the country's energy security. He said statements by India's External Affairs Minister and the Petroleum Minister have clearly outlined the government's preparedness.

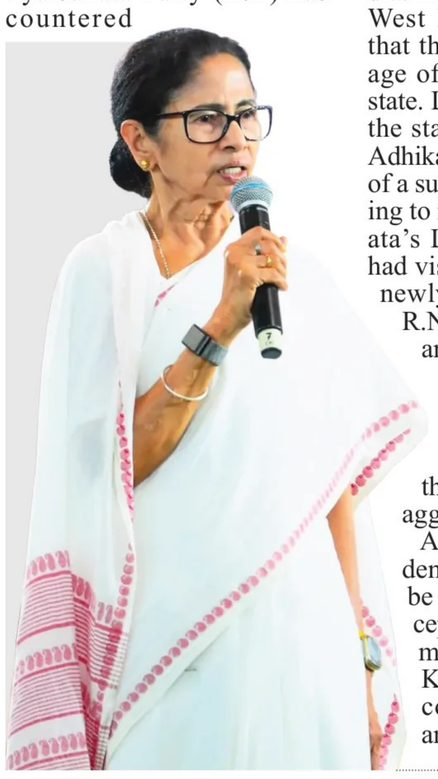
Deora also criticised the Opposition for allegedly politicising the issue. There is an attempt to spread panic, divert people from real issues, and create instability in India, he claimed. Meanwhile, Shiv Sena MP Naresh Mhaske accused Opposition leaders of deliberately attempting to create unrest.

Concerns over an alleged disruption in LPG supply amid the ongoing conflict in West Asia have triggered a political confrontation in poll-bound WB.

LPG Supply Concerns Spark Political Row in Poll-Bound West Bengal

KOLKATA

The issue has quickly emerged as a major political flashpoint ahead of the upcoming Assembly elections in the state. While the Trinamool Congress (TMC) has accused the central government of failing to make adequate arrangements in the wake of the escalating conflict involving Iran in West Asia, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has countered by blaming the state government for failing to control hoarding and black market activities.



Globally, concerns about energy supplies have intensified as the conflict in West Asia threatens to disrupt fuel and gas distribution chains. The situation is being closely watched internationally, with potential ripple effects on several countries, including India. However, BJP leaders in West Bengal have insisted that there is no actual shortage of LPG cylinders in the state. Leader of Opposition in the state Assembly Suvendu Adhikari dismissed the claims of a supply crisis while speaking to reporters outside Kolkata's Lok Bhavan. Adhikari had visited the venue to meet newly appointed Governor R.N. Ravi regarding a separate issue.

There is no shortage of LPG cylinders, Adhikari told the media, maintaining that the situation is being exaggerated.

According to local residents, several factors may be contributing to the perception of a shortage. Suman Bagh, a resident of Kolkata, suggested that a combination of global and local issues could be affecting distribution. Apart from the effects of the war, there are internal issues like server failures as well. We also hear that unscrupulous elements are hoarding stocks to take financial advantage of the situation. Then there are scheduling problems and last-mile supply hiccups, among other factors, he said.

The central government has already assured the public that there is no real shortage of LPG cylinders and has urged people not to panic or resort to unnecessary stockpiling.

Despite these assurances, the issue has gained significant political traction in the state. The Trinamool Congress has begun highlighting the matter as part of its election campaign, accusing the Centre of failing to safeguard the country's energy security during a global crisis.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has also strongly criticised the central government amid rising public anxiety over LPG availability. In a show of protest, Banerjee is scheduled to lead a demonstration march in Kolkata on Monday, March 16, raising the issue of LPG supply concerns and the broader impact of global tensions on everyday life in the state.

DMK allots two seats to ally KMDK amid friction with Cong

CHENNAI

The ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) on Friday formalised its seat-sharing pact with the Kongunadu Makkal Desiya Katchi (KMDK), allotting two constituencies to the regional ally for the upcoming Tamil Nadu Assembly elections.

The agreement was signed at the DMK headquarters here at Anna Arivalayam, in the presence of Chief Minister and DMK chief M.K. Stalin and KMDK general secretary E.R. Eswaran. As per the deal, KMDK candidates will contest both seats under the DMK's iconic 'rising sun' symbol. After concluding seat-sharing talks and confirming the alliance with the KMDK party, Stalin departed from Anna Arivalayam. This move comes amid intensifying friction between the DMK and its primary INDIA bloc ally, the Congress.

The Congress party has reportedly demanded a minimum of 35 seats, citing its improved performance in recent local and national polls. However, the DMK leadership is firm on contesting at least 180 seats on its own to ensure a comfortable majority in the 234-member house.

This has led to a significant dispute, with DMK negotiators indicating that the Congress may have to settle for 25 seats.

MP HC asks govt to submit plan for contaminated soil & groundwater

BHOPAL

The Madhya Pradesh High Court on Friday directed the state government to submit a detailed plan for assessment and remediation of contaminated soil and groundwater in and around the defunct Union Carbide factory in Bhopal by March 23.

The direction by a bench of Justices Vivek Kumar Singh and Ajay Kumar Nirankari came as it heard the writ petition of an NGO working for the victims of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy, seeking remediation of contaminated soil and groundwater in the surroundings of the Union Carbide factory and detoxification and time-bound action.

Responding to the writ petition, the state government filed an affidavit, stating that the remediation plan, including the assessment of contaminated soil and groundwater and the tendering process for cleaning up the surroundings, was underway and requested some more time.

After hearing the arguments from both sides, the bench fixed the matter for the next hearing on March 23.

Meanwhile, the affidavit, signed by Deputy Secretary, Bhopal Gas Tragedy Relief and Rehabilitation Department, Krishna Kant Dube, said that the department held a meeting on March 5 in compliance with the directions of the Oversight Committee/ Task Force constituted by the Supreme Court in 2023.

In the meeting presided by the Additional Chief Secretary, discussions were held on various issues such as assessment of remediation of contaminated soil and groundwater in and around the erstwhile UCIL premises, detoxification and decontamination of corroded plant and time-bound remediation, it said.

As the Oversight Committee had suggested that the Madhya Pradesh government may undertake fresh studies with the assistance of NEERI and NGRI to quantify the soil and groundwater contamination, as well as the mercury spillage and the groundwater dumps. In this regard, the state government submitted the action plan including identification and finalisation of an agency/consortium of agencies to carry out the study, the affidavit further read.

JAISHANKAR ARAGHCHI TALKS

EAM Holds Fourth Call with Iranian FM Araghchi Amid West Asia Crisis

NEW DELHI

The conversation marked the fourth such interaction between the two leaders as the crisis in West Asia continues to intensify. The call came a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian to review the evolving security situation in the region.

Sharing details of the conversation on social media platform X, Jaishankar said the two ministers discussed both bilateral relations and matters linked to BRICS, where India currently holds the chairmanship and Iran is a member of the grouping.

Had another conversation with Iranian FM Seyed Abbas Araghchi yesterday night. Discussed bilateral matters as also BRICS-related issues, Jaishankar said in his post.

According to a statement issued by Iran's Foreign Ministry, Araghchi briefed Jaishankar on the latest developments following what Tehran described as acts of aggression and atrocities by the United States and Israel against Iran. The Iranian minister also discussed the broader implications of the

conflict for regional and global stability.

The statement said Araghchi emphasised Iran's determination to exercise its legitimate right to self-defence against what he called aggressors. He also highlighted the need for regional and international organisations to condemn the military actions against Iran.

During the conversation, Araghchi underlined the importance of BRICS as a platform for promoting multilateral cooperation among emerging economies. He noted that the grouping could play a constructive role in the current circumstances by supporting efforts aimed at maintaining regional and global stability.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry said Araghchi stressed that BRICS has the potential to contribute meaningfully to diplomatic initiatives that could reduce tensions and promote security during the ongoing crisis. Jaishankar, according to the statement, conveyed India's readiness to further expand bilateral and multilateral cooperation with Iran through regional and international platforms. He also reiterated the importance of finding a path toward sustainable stability and security in the region.

The series of high-level conversations between India and Iran comes at a time when tensions in West Asia remain high, with global powers closely monitoring the situation and calling for diplomatic efforts to prevent further escalation.

Hemant Soren Flags 1,485 Police Vehicles, New Stations

RANCHI

The Chief Minister flagged off the vehicles from the Jharkhand Assembly premises, marking the first phase of a broader initiative aimed at enhancing police mobility, response time, and overall efficiency in maintaining law and order. The newly inducted fleet includes 636 four-wheeler patrolling vehicles—Mahindra Bolero BS-6 models—and 849 two-wheelers. Officials said these vehicles will significantly improve the operational capacity of the police, particularly in remote and rural regions where mobility often poses a challenge.

According to officials, the state government has sanctioned a total of 1,255 patrolling vehicles and 1,697 two-wheelers for the police department. The vehicles flagged off on Friday form the first phase of the deployment under this plan. Out of the 636 Bolero vehicles distributed, 614 have been directly allocated to various districts to strengthen ground-level policing. The remaining vehicles will be used by Quick Response Teams (QRTs) and other specialised units to improve emergency response and rapid deployment during critical situations.

Police Headquarters officials stated that the addition of these vehicles will help strengthen the patrolling system in both urban and rural areas.

Government of Karnataka
Panchayath Raj Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer, Hassan Division Hassan.

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION NO -29/2025-26 Dated : 12.03.2026

The tender are invited by the Executive Engineer, Panchayath Raj Engineering Division Hassan on be-half of the Governor of Karnataka through KPPP portal for the following works are sanctioned under the head of account of 2025-26TH CMIDP Grant The work details are available in the www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in portal. SL.NO.INDENT NO.01.RDPR/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT25152/Call-2 AMOUNT PUT TO TENDER IN LAKHS Rs.89.44 lakhs 02.RDPR/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT 25143/Call-2 AMOUNT PUT TO TENDER IN LAKHS Rs.94.09 lakhs THE IMPORTANT DATES ARE AS FOLLOWS Last Date & Time for Tender Queries/Clarifications 18.03.2026 16.00 hours Last Date & Time for receipt of tenders 20.03.2026 16.00 hours Date & Time for Opening of Technical Bid 23.03.2026 16.05 hours Date & Time for Opening of Financial Bid After approval of Technical bid

sd/- Executive Engineer, P.R.E.Division, Hassan.

ಪಾಸಾಸಂ೧/ಹಿಸನ/ಹಾಸನ/11189ಕೆಎಸ್.ಎಂಪಿಎ/2025–26

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
Public Works Department
Executive Engineer PWD Division Chikkodi

No/PWD/CKD DIV/AE-1/TENDER/2025-26/8524 DATE: 12/03/2026

Short term E-Tender/Retender Notification (Call-1, Call-2 & Call-3)

Executive Engineer PWD Division Chikkodi has invited item wise short term e-Tender/Retenders from Registration in KPWD Department authorized by Karnataka Government for the works coming under the jurisdiction of Chikodi PWD Division 10 works under head of account 4059-SCP (CMIDP) and 3 work under head of account 4059-TSP (CMIDP), Totally 13 No. of works, amount put to tender is minimum of Rs. 8.00 Lakhs and maximum of Rs. 80.00 Lakhs.

Calendar of events:1)Last date for queries & clarifications : 18-03-2026up to 5.30 PM, 2)Last Date of Receipt of Bids : 20-03-2026up to 5.00 PM,3)Date of opening of Technical bids (Two Cover System): 23-03-2026at 4.30 PM, 4)Date of opening of Financial bids (Two Cover System): "after approval of Technical bids", 5)If no bid received auto extension will be done by e-proc itself for 2 days.

For more information & forms of tender can be downloaded from kppp.karnataka.gov.in& departmental web site www.kpwd.gov.in. Further details can be collected from O/o Executive Engineer Public Works Dept.,Division Chikkodi during working hours.

Sd/- Executive Engineer PWD Division Chikodi.

DIPR/BGM/RO-NO-2079/KSMCA/2025-26

Office of the Executive Engineer, Public Works Department, Chikkamagaluru Division, Chikkamagaluru

Short-Term Tender Notice No.: 38/2025-26 Date: 12.03.2026

In the Tender Notice seen above Tender is invited from eligible contractors for total 18 works through KPP Portal under Head of Account: 8443-00-117-0-16-542 Deposit Contribution (SDMF), 3054-04-337-1-10-200 Maintenance of District Main Roads, 3054-03-102-0-01-200 Maintenance of State Highway Bridges, 3054-04-105-0-01-200 Maintenance of District and other Road Bridges, 5054-04-337-0-01-154 Improvements to District and other Roads, 5054-80-190-0-01-132 Karnataka State Road Development Corporation Limited – Capital Expenditure (State Highway Road Bridges), 5054-80-190-0-01-132 Karnataka State Road Development Corporation Limited – Capital Expenditure (District Main Road Bridges) related to Sub divisions of Public Works Department, Chikkamagaluru District. Details of capabilities to undertaking or having implemented the works (as per Standard Tender Document KW-1 & 3) should be attached. Contractors can be awarded the contract only if they have the minimum eligibilities as mentioned in Act 3. Minimum Approx. Amount Rs. 9.90 lakhs and Maximum Approx. Amount Rs. 150.00 lakhs. For Tender to be submitted through KPP Portal for 18 works (Indent No. 32575, 32578, 32581, 33758, 33759, 34498, 34138 (2nd Call), 34086 (2nd Call), 34087 (2nd Call), 34484, 34555 on 24.03.2026, Indent No. 34615, 34616, 34617, 30519, 35022, 34570 on 26.03.2026, Indent No. 19561 (5th Call) on 01.04.2026) tender should be submitted within 4.30 PM. For further details the case worker can be contacted during office hours.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Public Works Department, Chikkamagaluru Division, Chikkamagalur.

DIPR/ckm/ksmca/25-26/194/2017

U.S. Issues 30-Day Waiver for Russian Oil Purchases as Iran-Israel Conflict Drives Crude Prices Higher

The United States has announced a 30-day waiver allowing countries to purchase sanctioned Russian petroleum products that are already at sea, in a move aimed at stabilizing global oil and gas prices amid escalating tensions in the Middle East

BEIRUT

The temporary waiver is intended to provide short-term relief to global energy markets by permitting nations to receive Russian petroleum shipments that were already en route before the latest sanctions enforcement measures took effect. U.S. officials hope the move will help prevent further spikes in fuel costs as the war in the Middle East intensifies and threatens global oil supply routes.

Despite the measure, the waiver appeared to have little immediate impact on the markets. Benchmark Brent crude rose again on Friday, reaching around $101 per barrel by 1000 GMT. At the same time, Asian stock markets came under pressure, reflecting investor concerns about prolonged geopolitical instability and rising energy prices.

The surge in oil prices has been driven largely by fears that the conflict could severely disrupt supplies from one of the world's most critical energy-producing regions. Crude prices jumped about 9%, briefly touching the $100 mark per barrel. Overall, oil prices have surged nearly 40% since the beginning of the war, intensifying inflation concerns and weighing heavily on global financial markets, including U.S. equities.

Meanwhile, the conflict between Iran and Israel continued to escalate as it entered its third week.

On Friday, Iran launched another barrage of missiles and drones toward Israel. In response, the Israeli military reported carrying out strikes across Tehran and continuing attacks on Hezbollah targets across Lebanon, including areas in the capital city of Beirut.

Iranian media reported that explosions and fighter jet activity were heard in Tehran as well as in Karaj, a city located west of the Iranian capital. The developments came as rallies marking Quds Day an annual event held in Iran in support of Palestinians and Jerusalem began across the country.

QUICK READ

ASEAN seeks halt to escalating Middle East war

Maung

In a joint response to the escalating conflict, ASEAN ministers expressed growing concern over the economic fallout from the war, particularly the sharp rise in energy prices and disruptions to international shipping and supply chains. The region, which relies heavily on imported energy and global trade flows, is increasingly feeling the strain of the prolonged crisis. Officials warned that the continued instability in the Middle East could lead to further increases in fuel costs, placing pressure on businesses, transportation sectors, and households across Southeast Asia. Higher energy prices also threaten to fuel inflation and slow economic growth in several ASEAN member states.

Ex-Brazil President Bolsonaro hospitalised

Brasilia

Flavio Bolsonaro announced the development in a post on X, stating that his father had been rushed to a hospital after suddenly falling ill while in custody. The former president reportedly woke up feeling unwell, suffering from chills and repeated vomiting, prompting authorities to transfer him for medical evaluation. Details about Bolsonaro's current condition or the specific hospital where he was admitted were not immediately disclosed. Officials have yet to release further information about the cause of his illness or the treatment he is receiving.

Jair Bolsonaro, who served as Brazil's president from 2019 to 2022, is currently imprisoned amid ongoing legal proceedings related to investigations into alleged wrongdoing during and after his time in office.

Four U.S. Crew Members Killed After Military Refueling Aircraft Crash

WASHINGTON

According to the U.S. military, the aircraft involved in the crash was a refueling plane operating in western Iraq when the incident occurred. Officials confirmed that the crash involved another aircraft but emphasized that it was not the result of hostile action or friendly fire.

In a statement, the U.S. Central Command said the circumstances surrounding the incident remain under investigation. "The circumstances of the incident are under investigation. However, the loss of the aircraft was not due to hostile fire or friendly fire," the command said.

A U.S. official told Reuters that the second aircraft involved in the incident was also a military refueling aircraft, identified as the KC-135. The aircraft reportedly landed safely following the incident, while the other aircraft crashed, resulting in the fatalities and ongoing search operations.

The deaths add to the growing toll of U.S. service members killed during operations linked to the escalating conflict with Iran. According to officials, seven U.S. personnel had already been killed since U.S. operations against Iran began on February 28.

Four of the six crew members aboard a U.S. military aircraft that crashed in western Iraq have been confirmed dead, the U.S. military said on Friday

The latest incident raises the number of U.S. military deaths connected to the operations.

The United States has deployed a large number of aircraft across the Middle East as part of its ongoing military campaign targeting Iranian-linked forces and infrastructure. These operations involve extensive aerial missions, including mid-air refueling that allows fighter jets, bombers, and surveillance aircraft to remain operational for extended periods without landing.

The crash also highlights the inherent risks involved in aerial refueling operations, where aircraft must fly in close proximity while transferring fuel mid-flight. Such missions require precise coordination and are considered among the most complex operations in military aviation.

The KC-135 Stratotanker, built by Boeing in the 1950s and early 1960s, remains a critical component of the U.S. Air Force's refueling fleet. For decades, the aircraft has served as the backbone of the U.S. military's ability to sustain long-range air missions by enabling other aircraft to refuel while airborne.

Search and recovery teams continue to work at the crash site in western Iraq as investigations proceed to determine the exact cause of the incident.

Brazilian banker Daniel Vorcaro, long known for leading the rapid rise of Banco Master, has found himself at the center of a major political and financial scandal after his arrest last week

Brazil Banker Daniel Vorcaro's Arrest Exposes Alleged Web of Influence

SAO PAULO

For years, Vorcaro was regarded primarily as the driving force behind Banco Master's aggressive expansion in Brazil's banking sector. While the bank's rapid growth attracted attention from financial analysts, many remained puzzled by the speed and scale of its rise. Far less noticed at the time was Vorcaro's ability to cultivate relationships with powerful figures in Brazil's political and institutional landscape.

According to materials leaked by lawmakers who obtained files from a Federal Police investigation, Vorcaro's cellphone records show communications with several high-ranking officials. These reportedly include Supreme Court justices, leaders of Brazil's Senate and House of Representatives, and senior officials within the country's central bank.

Vorcaro was arrested last week for the second time over his alleged role in a large-scale fraud scheme worth billions of dollars. The revelations from the leaked records have intensified political tensions and could have serious consequences for prominent figures, particularly as Brazil heads into an election year.

Senator Alessandro Vieira, who is advocating for a congressional inquiry into Vorcaro's connections with members of the judiciary, described the case as a "ticking time bomb." Vieira said the revelations point to potential involvement by highly influential individuals within the Brazilian government. "There are very powerful figures in the Republic with clear involvement," Vieira said, noting that his party is part of the country's ruling coalition.

Some officials have already faced scrutiny following the disclosures. Two central bank officials were removed from their roles after regulators discovered they had been advising Vorcaro. The case also reached Brazil's Supreme Court, where Justice Dias Toffoli stepped down from overseeing a Federal Police investigation into the alleged fraud after reports emerged linking his family's company to financial dealings with the banker. Toffoli denied any wrongdoing, stating in a public statement that he had never received payments from Banco Master or from Vorcaro personally.

The unfolding investigation has raised concerns about possible conflicts of interest and the extent of influence within Brazil's political and financial institutions, with lawmakers pushing for deeper scrutiny into the relationships exposed by the probe.

Thai family waits for news of missing relative on ship attacked in Straits of Hormuz

BAN SAI

Thousands of miles from the Middle East in Thailand's rural northeast, Sommai Butdee waits for news of her nephew, one of three crew members missing from the Thai-flagged vessel after it was struck with two projectiles earlier this week as it travelled through the Strait of Hormuz.

On Friday, Sommai, 58, gathered with other relatives under their wooden stilt home in Surin province's Ban Sai village. Holding out her phone, she showed a photo of her nephew, 27-year-old Panupong Muentan, on his graduation from a merchant marine training centre.

Trump Tells G7 Leaders Iran Is "About to Surrender," Report Says

WASHINGTON

During the virtual meeting Trump reportedly briefed allied leaders about the results of a U.S. military operation dubbed "Operation Epic Fury." According to Axios, the U.S. president told G7 leaders that the operation had significantly weakened Iran's leadership structure.

Trump was quoted as telling the group that he had "got rid of a cancer that was threatening us all," while emphasizing the impact of the recent military campaign against Iranian targets. He also reportedly claimed that Iran's leadership had been so severely disrupted that there was no clear authority left to formally announce a surrender.

"Nobody knows who is the leader, so there is no one that can announce surrender," Trump told the leaders during the call, according to officials familiar with the discussion.

The White House did not immediately respond to requests for comment regarding the reported remarks, as the inquiry was made outside regular business hours.

The reported statements come amid intensifying hostilities across the Middle East. The conflict, now approaching its second week, has seen repeated exchanges of drone and missile strikes between Iran and its adversaries in the region, raising fears of a wider escalation.

Speaking publicly on Friday, Trump used harsh language when referring to Iran's leadership, calling them "deranged scumbags." He added that it was his "great honor" to have ordered strikes that resulted in the killing of Iranian leaders as part of the ongoing military campaign.

Rastriya Swatantra Party Wins Nepal Polls: Balendra Shah Set to Become PM

KATHMANDU

According to the Election Commission, the Rastriya Swatantra Party secured 182 seats in Nepal's 275-member parliament in the March 5 election. The result marks the largest parliamentary majority won by any political party in the country in more than six decades.

The election was the first national vote held since mass anti-corruption protests erupted across Nepal last September. The demonstrations, largely led by Gen Z activists, resulted in the deaths of 77 people and ultimately forced the previous government from power.

Balendra Shah, who gained popularity both as a rapper and later as a political figure, has campaigned on promises to fight corruption, reform governance, and restore political stability. His party's overwhelming victory reflects strong public frustration with traditional political parties that have dominated Nepal's political landscape for decades. Constitutional expert Purna Man Shakya said the scale of the victory could provide Nepal with a rare period of stable governance. "If everything goes well, we can expect that it can give a stable government for five years," Shakya said, referring to the internal disputes and coalition struggles that have repeatedly weakened previous administrations.

Nepal has experienced chronic political instability since the end of its monarchy and transition to a republic. In the past 35 years, the country has seen 32 changes of government, with frequent coalition breakdowns and power struggles undermining long-term policymaking.

The repeated political shifts have also damaged investor confidence and slowed economic development. Analysts say prolonged instability has hindered job creation and delayed critical infrastructure and development projects in the country.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

	7		9			3		
1		9		4	3		7	8
3		4	7			6		
	5			7	6		2	9
9		7	4			8		
2		6		8	9		5	3
	9		8			1		
4		5		3	1		8	7
7	1		2			5		

3	9	8	5	2	4	6	7	1
7	2	6	9	1	3	5	4	8
5	4	1	8	6	7	3	9	2
2	3	4	1	7	8	9	5	6
1	8	7	6	5	9	4	2	3
9	6	5	3	4	2	1	8	7
6	7	9	2	3	5	8	1	4
4	5	3	7	8	1	2	6	9
8	1	2	4	9	6	7	3	5

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

ZELENSKIY PARIS SUPPORT

Zelenskiy seeks allies' assurances in Paris

PARIS

Zelenskiy's visit comes at a critical time for Ukraine as the widening conflict in the Middle East raises questions about the continued supply of Western military aid, particularly air defence systems that Kyiv relies on to counter Russian missile and drone attacks.

The Ukrainian leader has warned that Ukraine already faces a severe shortage of air defence missiles and that the situation could worsen as global demand for such weapons increases. According to Zelenskiy, Gulf Arab nations have been using large numbers of air defence missiles to counter frequent Iranian strikes, potentially reducing available stockpiles that might otherwise support Ukraine.

Earlier this week, Zelenskiy said Gulf states had used more PAC-3 air defence missiles against Iranian attacks in just a few days than Ukraine had received from Washington over the past four years. However, he did not specify the source of the figures.

The conflict in the Middle East has also impacted global energy markets, pushing oil prices sharply higher. The surge in oil prices benefits Russia, which relies heavily on energy exports for revenue, while Ukraine continues to face financial strain as the war with Moscow drags on.

The shifting geopolitical focus has raised concerns in Kyiv that international attention and military resources could be redirected toward the Middle East at a time when Ukraine remains heavily dependent on Western support to sustain its defence efforts.

Meanwhile, Ukraine is also awaiting financial backing from the European Union. The bloc has yet to finalize approval of a proposed €90 billion loan package that would partly allow Kyiv to purchase additional weapons and strengthen its military capabilities. Ukrainian officials hope the loan agreement will be approved and implemented by mid-April, providing much-needed funding for the country's defence needs and helping sustain its resistance against Russian forces.

Zelenskiy's talks in Paris are expected to focus on securing continued military and financial support from Western partners, as Ukraine works to ensure that the shifting global crisis does not weaken international backing for its war effort.

Tottenham search for salvation, Arsenal ready for title charge

Spurs fight relegation as Arsenal close in on long-awaited Premier League title

LONDON

Tottenham Hotspur travel to Anfield this weekend searching desperately for relief in their deepening relegation battle, while Arsenal look to tighten their grip on the Premier League title race with the season entering its decisive phase.

Just eight matches separate Arsenal from ending a 22-year wait for the English crown — their first since the legendary "Invincibles" side led by Arsène Wenger lifted the trophy in 2004. Mikel Arteta's team currently sit seven points clear at the top and could stretch the advantage to 10 points with victory over Everton at the Emirates Stadium. Second-placed Manchester City, who still have a game in hand, face a tricky away fixture against West Ham United shortly after Arsenal's match. Despite City's continued threat, Arsenal remain firmly in control of the

title race after bouncing back from a brief slump in February with three consecutive league wins.

While Arsenal dream of glory, Tottenham are fighting for survival at the opposite end of the table. Igor Tudor's side sit 16th and just one point above both West Ham United and Nottingham Forest, leaving them in real danger of relegation for the first time since the 1977–78 season.

Tottenham's struggles have been compounded by a disastrous run of form. They have lost their last six matches in all competitions and are winless in their previous 11 league games. Their woes deepened earlier this week with a humiliating 5-2 defeat to Atlético Madrid in the first leg of the UEFA Champions League round of 16.

Now Spurs face a daunting trip to Liverpool, where they have not won since 2011. Defender Kevin Danso admitted the squad must show greater resilience as the club battles to avoid the drop.

"Everybody has given everything they've got. It's down to us to dig a little deeper and show character," he said.

Elsewhere, attention will focus on a crucial top-four clash between Manchester United and Aston Villa at Old Trafford. United currently sit third, level on points with fourth-placed Villa, making the encounter a decisive moment in the race for qualification to the UEFA Champions League next season.

With only a handful of matches remaining, the Premier League is poised for dramatic twists at both ends of the table.

AFC Women's Asian Cup:

India gain lessons despite tough debut campaign

SYDNEY

India's maiden appearance at the AFC Women's Asian Cup ended with valuable lessons rather than results, as the first-time qualifiers struggled against stronger opposition despite displaying courage, fitness and flashes of individual brilliance.

Entering the tournament as the lowest-ranked side in their group and among the bottom three teams overall, India faced an uphill battle in their quest for a place in the quarter-finals and a possible pathway to the FIFA Women's World Cup. For that dream to materialise, India needed near-perfect performances and favourable results from rivals like Vietnam women's national football team and Chinese Taipei women's national football team. Neither scenario unfolded.

Despite the defeats, India produced several commendable performances. Goalkeeper Panthoi Chanu Elangbam emerged as one of the standout players, making crucial saves and showing composure under pressure. Her leadership from the back helped steady the team, especially during tense moments against Vietnam and Chinese Taipei.

Captain Sweety Devi also impressed with her determination and defensive grit. Even while playing through discomfort due to knee protection, the central defender continued to organise the backline until a heavy collision forced her off the pitch.

Among the attacking highlights was a stunning strike from Manisha Kalyan, a goal that will likely be remembered as one of India's standout moments in the tournament.

Another memorable effort came from Sanfida Nongrum, whose clever lob briefly lifted Indian spirits.

However, India struggled to consistently create chances from open play. Kalyan often lacked passing options in attack, while the team found it difficult to build from the back under sustained pressure. Defensive gaps also proved costly, particularly against well-drilled opponents who exploited spaces behind India's backline.

Head coach Amelia Valverde, who brought World Cup experience to the role, had limited preparation time with the squad. The All India Football Federation organised an exposure trip to Turkey before the tournament, but cancelled fixtures and visa complications meant India had few competitive international matches leading into the Asian Cup.

Despite the disappointing results, the campaign provided crucial experience for a relatively young squad. Many of the players are expected to remain part of the national setup for future Olympic and Asian Cup qualification cycles.

For Indian women's football, the challenge now lies in building on this experience through better preparation, stronger domestic competitions and regular exposure to higher-ranked international teams.

Leclerc hopes 'Year of the Horse' brings Ferrari better luck in Shanghai

SHANGHAI

Charles Leclerc is hoping the Chinese "Year of the Horse" proves a positive omen for Scuderia Ferrari as the team looks to bounce back at the Chinese Grand Prix after last season's dramatic setback.

Ferrari endured a nightmare at the Shanghai race in 2025 when both cars were disqualified after the race for "excessive plank wear" on the undersides of their vehicles. The controversial decision wiped out what had initially been promising results for the Italian team.

Speaking ahead of this weekend's race at the Shanghai International Circuit, Leclerc joked that the Chinese zodiac's Year of the Horse could bring good fortune to Ferrari, whose famous badge features the prancing horse, or "Cavallino."

"I've been with the team for many years and I've been waiting for the Year of the Horse since the first year I joined Ferrari," said the Monaco driver.

INDIA COACH MARIJNE DEMANDS SHARPER FINISHING DESPITE DOMINANT WIN OVER WALES IN QUALIFIERS

Marijne urges sharper finishing despite India's impressive win over Wales

HYDERABAD

Sjoerd Marijne has urged India's women's hockey team to improve their finishing despite a commanding 4-1 victory over Wales women's national field hockey team in the ongoing qualifiers for the FIH Women's Hockey World Cup.

India had already secured qualification for the global tournament before the match, but produced their most fluent and attacking performance of the competition at the G. M. C. Balayogi Athletic Stadium in Hyderabad. The hosts dominated proceedings, creating numerous scoring chances and delighting the home crowd with an energetic display.

However, Marijne said the team must become more clinical in front of goal if they are to compete consistently at the highest level.

"Am I happy? Yes and no," the Dutch coach said after the match. "When you are winning, everything looks perfect, but that was not the case. The only thing I could blame the girls for is that we didn't score more goals. We created many opportunities, but we have to be more careful and precise with the ball."

Marijne emphasised that raising the performance

benchmark remains his priority as the team continues its preparations for the World Cup.

"We want the benchmark to be higher and higher. If you see the speed of our attacks, that is exactly the way we want to play," he added.

The coach reserved special praise for forward Navneet Kaur, who delivered an outstanding performance by scoring a hat-trick against Wales. Marijne described her as one of the leading players in world hockey and highlighted her growing leadership role within the squad.

"She's an absolute top player and in her prime," he said. "She takes a leadership role which is very important. But someone also has to give the ball to her, so the performance was a collective effort."

Navneet acknowledged that the team could have converted more chances, particularly from open play. She said the players were motivated to bounce back strongly after a frustrating draw with Scotland women's national field hockey team earlier in the competition.

Reflecting on the squad's development, Marijne also credited former junior team coach Erik Wonink for laying a strong foundation. Several players from the junior programme are now part of the senior side, making the transition smoother for the current coaching staff as India looks to build momentum ahead of the World Cup.

Pant urges unity as Lucknow Super Giants welcome new recruits ahead of IPL 2026

NEW DELHI

Rishabh Pant has called for strong team bonding and clear communication as Lucknow Super Giants prepare for the upcoming season of the Indian Premier League.

The wicketkeeper-batsman shared an encouraging message with the franchise's new recruits during a team interaction ahead of IPL 2026, urging players to learn from each other and build strong relationships before the season begins.

"A lot of people are from last year and a few new faces have joined. Welcome everyone," Pant said in a video released by the franchise. "Let's try to build relationships. If we don't talk about cricket and communicate, we are not going to improve. As individuals, let's take whatever we can from each other and try to build something for this season."

During the mini-auction held last December, Lucknow strengthened their squad with several notable additions. Among them were Sri Lankan all-rounder Wanindu Hasaranga, South African fast bowler Anrich Nortje and Australian wicketkeeper-batter Josh Inglis. The franchise also brought in Mukul Choudhary, Naman Tiwari and Akshat Raghuwanshi to add depth and emerging talent to the side.

In addition, Lucknow completed two significant trades, acquiring young all-rounder Arjun Tendulkar from Mumbai Indians and experienced Indian pacer Mohammed Shami from Sunrisers Hyderabad.

Pant emphasised that the pre-season camp offers players the ideal opportunity to understand each other's roles and set clear goals before the tournament begins.

"When we come into a season, we always want to build something and aim to win. But at the same time, it's important to be clear about what you want to achieve as an individual and as a team," he said.

Lucknow endured a difficult campaign in the previous season, managing only six victories and finishing seventh in the points table. Despite Pant's unbeaten 118 against Royal Challengers Bengaluru in their final league match, the team fell short of playoff qualification.

The franchise will begin its IPL 2026 campaign against Delhi Capitals on April 1 at the Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow before travelling to face Sunrisers Hyderabad on April 5 in their second match of the season.

Big 12 switches back to hardwood after players struggle on slippery glass court

KANSAS CITY

The Big 12 Conference has decided to abandon its experimental glass playing surface and return to a traditional hardwood court for the final stages of its basketball tournament after players complained about slippery conditions.

Conference commissioner Brett Yormark announced the decision after consulting coaches of the four semifinal teams, saying the change was made to ensure the comfort and safety of the athletes competing on one of college basketball's biggest stages.

"After consultation with the coaches of our four semifinal teams, I have decided that in order to provide our student-athletes with the greatest level of comfort, we will transition to a hardwood court for the remainder of the tournament," Yormark said in a statement.

The tournament had initially been played on an innovative glass court produced by ASB GlassFloor, a surface that features LED panels capable of displaying graphics, statistics and advertisements beneath the players' feet.

While the technology has previously been showcased at events such as the NBA All-Star Game and in European competitions, the Big 12 tournament marked the first time it was used for an official collegiate competition in the United States.

However, several players reported traction issues during games, with multiple slips occurring when athletes attempted to plant their feet or change direction quickly.

The problem became more evident during the matchup between Texas Tech Red Raiders and Iowa State Cyclones, when Texas Tech guard Christian Anderson strained a muscle after slipping on the court in his team's 75–63 defeat.

"Obviously, the floor is a bit slippery," Anderson said after the game. "I think I just kind of mis-stepped or did a movement that caused me to slip."

MMSC to host India's first international karting meet at MIKA in September

CHENNAI

The Madras Motor Sports Club (MMSC) will host India's first-ever international karting competition, the FIA-CIK Arrive and Drive, at the Madras International Karting Arena (MIKA) here in September, marking a major milestone for motorsport in the country.

The announcement was made during the club's annual awards ceremony celebrating the winners of the 2025 national racing championships. MMSC vice-president Vicky Chandhok said the Chennai round would be one of three global rounds of the competition and is expected to attract karting talent from around the world.

"This meet at the MIKA circuit will be one of the three rounds, and we will see karters from across the globe competing in it. It is the first of its kind in India," Chandhok said.

The event will provide Indian drivers with a rare opportunity to compete alongside international racers on home soil and gain exposure to global standards in karting — widely regarded as the foundation of professional motorsport careers.

Another major announcement at the ceremony concerned the champion of the 2025 MRF Formula 2000 Championship. The title winner will receive an all-expenses-paid test drive with the Double R Racing Formula 3 team, run by former Kimi Räikkönen and manager Steve Robertson. Chandhok described the opportunity as a significant step forward for Indian drivers aspiring to climb the international motorsport ladder. "This is a big step up for the MRF F2000 champion in terms of experience and exposure," he said. The function's chief guest, Arun Mammen, vice-chairman and managing director of MRF Ltd., reaffirmed the tyre manufacturer's long-standing commitment to motorsports in India. MRF has been a key supporter of multiple national championships across both two-wheeler and four-wheeler racing disciplines. "We will continue to make motorsports more popular in India. We see encouraging signs that the government is keen to host world-class events in the country," Mammen said.

He also highlighted MRF's advanced tyre development infrastructure, noting that the company operates a specialised tyre-testing facility with multiple tracks — a unique setup in India that enables rapid testing and development.

QUICK READ

India plans new incentives for phone manufacturing

New Delhi

India is planning a new set of incentives to support domestic mobile phone manufacturing after its flagship production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for the sector ends this month. The move is expected to benefit global smartphone makers such as Apple and Samsung, which have significantly expanded their production in the country in recent years, according to multiple reports. The government's decision to continue supporting the industry comes at a time when India may lose some of its tariff advantage over China in exporting goods to the United States.

Mercedes-Benz India to raise car prices by around 2 pc from April 1

New Delhi

Luxury carmaker Mercedes-Benz on Friday announced a price increase of around 2 per cent across its vehicle portfolio in India from April 1, 2026. The company said the move comes in response to continued foreign exchange volatility and rising input costs. According to Brendon Sissing, Vice President, sales and marketing, the decision has been taken mainly due to the sustained depreciation of the Indian rupee against the euro, which has increased operational costs for the company. He said that while the company always tries to absorb rising costs, a price correction has become necessary to ensure the long-term sustainability of the business.

India's data centre capacity grows to 1,500 MW: Govt

India's data centre industry is expanding rapidly, with total installed capacity increasing from around 375 MW in 2020 to nearly 1,500 MW by 2025, the government informed Parliament on Friday

NEW DELHI

In a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry and Electronics and IT, Jitin Prasada, said the government has been actively strengthening the digital infrastructure required to support emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence.

As part of efforts to boost AI development, about 38,231 Graphics Processing Units (GPUs) have been onboarded through 14 empanelled service providers and data centres under the AI compute capacity framework. These computing resources are being made available to startups, researchers, academic institutions and other eligible users at a subsidised average rate of Rs 65 per hour, which is roughly one-third of the global average cost.

Prasada said the initiative aims to ensure affordable access to high-performance computing resources for innovation and research in AI and other advanced technologies.

India's data centre infrastructure is currently spread across major technology hubs including Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Noida and Jamnagar. These cities have emerged as key locations for digital infrastructure due to their connectivity, availability of skilled workforce and access to power.

The minister noted that the

government is aware of the growing infrastructure needs of the data centre ecosystem, particularly in terms of electricity and water supply.

According to projections by the Ministry of Power, electricity demand from data centres is expected to rise significantly as the sector expands alongside AI and other large-scale computing applications. The demand is estimated to reach 13.56 gigawatts (GW) by 2031-32.

To meet this rising demand, India's national transmission infrastructure is being continuously expanded to ensure reliable power supply across regions.

Prasada also highlighted the role of the recently enacted Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Act. The legislation is expected to support future deployment of small modular and micro nuclear reactors, which could provide reliable and stable power for emerging sectors such as AI and data centres.

Captive, Commercial Coal Mines Cross 200 MT Production Mark in FY26

India's captive, commercial and other coal mines have crossed the landmark of 200 million tonnes (MT) of coal production on March 11 during the financial year 2025–26, the Coal Ministry said on Friday

NEW DELHI

According to the ministry, captive and commercial coal mines accounted for the bulk of the production, contributing 194.17 MT, while other mines produced 6.06 MT, taking the total output beyond the historic 200 MT mark.

The sector achieved another notable milestone earlier this month when coal production in FY 2025–26 surpassed the total output of the previous financial year. On March 7, 2026, production crossed the FY 2024–25 figure of 197.32 MT, reaching the milestone 24 days earlier than last year.

The ministry highlighted that the coal mining sector has maintained strong momentum, registering a year-on-year growth of 10.56 per cent during the same period.

This achievement reflects the collective efforts and unwavering commitment of various Central and State Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs/SPSUs) along with private sector participants, whose relentless work and resilience have played a crucial role in strengthening the nation's coal production, the ministry said.

Coal dispatch has also recorded steady growth during the financial year. Dispatch volumes rose by 7.71 per cent year-on-year, increasing from 182.98 MT to 197.09 MT. The government said the increase in dispatch reflects the sector's growing ability to meet the country's rising energy needs while ensuring a stable supply of coal to key consuming sectors.

The ministry stated that it remains focused on further advancing captive and commercial coal mining as an important pillar of India's energy ecosystem.

Backed by forward-looking policies, technological innovation and the sustained efforts of the mining workforce, the coal sector continues to expand its contribution to the country's economic growth and energy security.

The government also emphasised that the latest achievements reaffirm coal's crucial role in ensuring reliable energy supply, supporting industrial expansion and reinforcing the vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat. These developments align with India's long-term goal of becoming a developed nation, or Viksit Bharat, by 2047.

Meanwhile, domestic coal production and supply have continued to outpace consumption during the current year, leading to record-high coal stock levels across mines and thermal power plants, further strengthening the country's energy preparedness.

Pakistan is facing a serious shortage of essential medicines as the ongoing conflict in the Middle East disrupts the import of pharmaceutical raw materials and other critical supplies, according to a new report

Pakistan Faces Medicine Shortage as Middle East Conflict Disrupts Imports

NEW DELHI

The report stated that Pakistan's existing stock of pharmaceutical raw materials is sufficient for only about one-and-a-half months, raising concerns about potential shortages if supply disruptions continue.

The conflict involving Iran, Israel and the United States has led to the suspension of several international flights, which has significantly affected Pakistan's ability to import life-saving medicines, pharmaceutical ingredients and baby formula.

According to the report, the situation could have serious consequences for ordinary Pakistanis who are already struggling with high inflation and rising healthcare costs.

Patients suffering from chronic illnesses such as cancer, diabetes and heart disease could be particularly vulnerable if the supply shortage leads to price increases or limits the availability of essential medicines.

Many of them depend on the country's public healthcare system, the report noted, adding that shortages could place additional pressure on already strained health services.

Infant nutrition could also be affected as baby formula is largely imported. Prolonged disruptions in supply chains could reduce the availability of these products, potentially affecting thousands of families across the country.

The report also highlighted Pakistan's long-standing dependence on imported pharmaceutical ingredients, which health experts have repeatedly flagged as a major concern.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, experts had warned about the country's limited capacity to manufacture active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) domestically. They had emphasised the risks associated with relying heavily on relatively cheaper imports for critical medical supplies.

However, according to the report, little progress has been made in strengthening domestic production capacity since then, leaving the country vulnerable to global supply disruptions.

The report argued that the current situation underscores the dangers of relying on short-term import solutions without developing strong local manufacturing capabilities.

It urged the Pakistani government to treat pharmaceutical self-reliance as a matter of national security. Suggested measures include providing tax incentives for domestic production of pharmaceutical raw materials, investing in pharmaceutical infrastructure and establishing emergency stockpiling systems to ensure stable supplies during global crises.

S. Korea's antitrust regulator probes alleged price-fixing by gas stations

SEOUL

The antitrust regulator is looking into suspected price-rigging collusion cases involving gas stations in southern regions amid volatile energy prices stemming from ongoing turmoil in the Middle East, officials said on Friday. Ju Biung-ghi, chairman of the Fair Trade Commission (FTC), made the remark at a meeting of a special government task force of ministers overseeing market prices the previous day, according to FTC officials.

He said several gas stations in the southeastern city of Busan, North Gyeongsang Province and the southern resort island of Jeju are subject to an FTC investigation over alleged price-fixing.

Ju stressed that the FTC will impose stern penalties on business practices found to have gained unfair profits by exploiting the situation, according to the FTC.

The regulator has been conducting inspections on gas station prices nationwide after domestic fuel prices surged following air strikes by the United States and Israel on Iran late last month. As part of efforts to ease soaring fuel prices and reduce burdens on consumers, the government introduced a fuel price cap system earlier in the day. The system sets maximum prices for petroleum products supplied by oil refiners to gas stations and distributors.

The FTC said Ju also vowed continued efforts to lower prices of everyday groceries to ease pressure on people, citing recent price cuts of bread, instant noodle and snack products by local food manufacturers. The watchdog previously penalised flour and sugar companies over price-fixing allegations.

Govt to keep fiscal deficit within revised estimates: FM Sitharaman

NEW DELHI

The government remains committed to keeping the fiscal deficit within the revised estimates for FY26, even as it brings in the second batch of supplementary demands for grants, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Friday. Replying to the debate in the Lok Sabha on the Supplementary Demands for Grants (Second Batch) for 2025–26, the Finance Minister said the additional spending proposals would remain within the fiscal deficit target presented in the Union Budget 2026–27.

I wish to reiterate that with all the additional provisions we are bringing through technical and cash supplementary demands, no Member of Parliament should wonder whether I will be able to achieve the fiscal deficit target set while presenting the Budget in this House, she told the house.

The Budget for 2026–27 clearly states the fiscal deficit target for the year ending March 31, 2027. The fiscal deficit in 2026-27 is targeted at 4.3 per cent of GDP, lower than the revised estimate of 4.4 per cent of GDP in 2025-26, continuing the government's fiscal consolidation path towards a lower deficit target in subsequent years.

FM Sitharaman further stated that I would like to reiterate that the assurances given in this House, including those related to the second Supplementary Demands for Grants, will remain within the fiscal deficit target that was presented in Parliament on February 1, 2026.

The Supplementary Demands entail a gross expenditure of Rs 2.81 lakh crore, with 61 grant requests under it. Sitharaman reiterated that the supplementary demands are within the fiscal deficit number mentioned in the Budget.

Sensex, Nifty drops nearly 2 pc amid escalating Middle East tensions

MUMBAI

Indian equity markets ended sharply lower on Friday as rising tensions in the Middle East weighed on investor sentiment and triggered broad-based selling across sectors. The benchmark indices, Nifty and Sensex, closed deep in the red as concerns over the prolonged US-Iran conflict intensified fears of a gas supply crunch and higher energy costs.

The Nifty declined 488.05 points, or 2.06 per cent, to settle at 23,151.10. Meanwhile, the Sensex dropped 1,470.50 points, or 1.93 per cent, ending the session at 74,563.92.

On the downside, 23,100 now acts as an immediate support level and has emerged as a minor intra-day demand zone, an analyst stated.

On the upside, 23,450–23,500 has now turned into

the immediate resistance zone, which also coincides with the earlier breakdown level, according to the expert.

Only two stocks -- Bharti Airtel and Hindustan Unilever -- managed to stay in green on Sensex.

L&T, Tata Steel, SBI, Maruti Suzuki India and Axis Bank were among top losers on Sensex.

Market volatility also increased during the session. The India VIX, often referred to as the fear gauge of the market, jumped sharply by 6.32 per cent to 22.88 during the day and eventually settled 5.23 per cent higher at 22.65.

Broader markets also mirrored the weakness seen in the benchmarks. The Nifty Midcap 100 ended 2.62 per cent lower, while the Nifty Smallcap 100 slipped 2.52 per cent by the close.

Sectorally, metal stocks were among the worst hit, with the Nifty Metal plunging about 5 per cent.

The Nifty PSU Bank and the Nifty Media indices also underperformed the broader market.

Experts said that the sharp decline across indices reflected growing investor caution amid global geopolitical tensions and concerns about the potential impact on energy supplies and economic stability. The Indian rupee weakened for the second consecutive week, settling at a fresh record low as a geopolitical worry weighed on the local currency.

LPG SUPPLY CONCERNS

OMCs Working to Ensure Smooth LPG Supply Amid Iran War Tensions: CPIL CMD

MUMBAI

Oil marketing companies (OMCs) or firms that are involved in liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) supply are making continuous efforts to maintain smooth distribution across the country amid global tensions triggered by the Iran war, Nitin Khara, Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Confidence Petroleum India Limited (CPIL), said on Friday. He said the company is closely monitoring the situation and reviewing LPG supply conditions on a daily basis.

Every morning, we assess how to ensure gas supply for that day. Dealers from across the country keep calling throughout the day, and we try our best to ensure timely delivery, Khara said, adding that some difficulties have arisen due to limited availability of LPG. Khara explained that LPG importers are currently facing a major logistical challenge as two LPG vessels are stranded near sea ports and are unable to either enter or leave, disrupting the regular supply chain.

Under normal circumstanc-

es, the company imports around 40,000 metric tonnes of LPG every month. However, the present situation has affected this import cycle and created uncertainty in supply.

He said the initial plan was to unload about 850 metric tonnes of LPG from the shipment, while the remaining quantity was scheduled to be supplied to the Malaysian operations of Norway-based energy company Equinor under a prior commitment.

Although there was no formal sale-purchase agreement in place, Khara said the company generally honours such commitments as part of its business practices. However, several dealers across India have requested that the available LPG be supplied to domestic consumers instead, given the current supply concerns.

Considering these requests, we are evaluating the possibility of utilising the available LPG within the country to provide relief to domestic consumers, Khara said.

He also noted that some state governments have suggested unloading the gas locally to strengthen domestic supply and support the market during the ongoing disruptions.

If the LPG is retained within India instead of being shipped abroad, it could ensure additional supply for approximately 12 to 13 days, providing temporary relief to consumers and dealers.

Khara added that the ongoing global conflict and related disruptions have affected LPG production and supply chains worldwide, making it important for companies to continuously adapt their logistics and distribution strategies.

Duplantis clears 6.31m, sets pole vault world record for 15th time

Sweden's Armand Duplantis breaks his own pole vault world record again

UPPSALA

Armand Duplantis soared to another historic milestone after clearing 6.31 metres to set the pole vault world record for the 15th time at the Mondo Classic meet in Upsala, Sweden.

The 26-year-old Swedish star needed only four attempts during the indoor event held in his adopted hometown to rewrite the record books yet again. Duplantis comfortably cleared 5.65m, 5.90m and 6.08m — all on his first attempts — before asking officials to raise the bar by a massive 23 centimetres to a world-record height of 6.31m. To the delight of the home crowd, Duplantis cleared the mark on his very first attempt, instantly ending the competition and cementing his status as the most dominant pole vaulter in history. The record extended his remarkable streak of repeatedly improving the global mark since first breaking it in 2020 with a jump of 6.17m.

Competing in front of an ecstatic Swedish audience made the achievement even more special for the Olympic champion.

"This is my home. This is our home," Duplantis told the cheering crowd after the jump. "Every time I'm on the track, I represent you, and I do it with great pride."

The world record leap marked only the second time Duplantis has broken the mark in Sweden. His previous home-soil record came in Stockholm last June when he cleared 6.28m, one of four world-record jumps he produced in 2025.

An emotional Duplantis later said he experimented with a longer run-up to gain better control of a stiffer pole, a change that helped him produce the record-breaking vault.

"I tried to do something new and push myself to the limit. It's a really great feeling," he said.

Norway's Sondre Guttormsen finished second with a clearance of 6.00m. Greece's Emmanouil Karalis, who earlier cleared 6.17m at the Greek indoor championships this year, failed in three attempts at the same height.

Duplantis will next compete at the World Athletics Indoor Championships in Torun, Poland, later this month, where he could once again push the record even higher.

Sun TV moves Madras High Court to restrain CSK from using Rajinikanth songs

CHENNAI

Sun TV Network has approached the Madras High Court seeking an order to restrain the Chennai Super Kings (CSK) from using songs from films starring Rajinikanth in promotional videos for the upcoming Indian Premier League 2026 season.

In its petition, Sun Network has alleged that CSK used songs from Rajinikanth's popular films, including Jailer, Coolie and Jailer 2, in promotional videos released on social media ahead of the IPL season. The company has argued that the songs are copyrighted content owned by its production arm Sun Pictures and cannot be used without prior authorisation.

The dispute reportedly centres around the use of the hit track "Hukum" from Jailer in a promotional video shared by CSK's social media team. Sun Pictures, which produced the Rajinikanth blockbuster, holds the rights to the music and has objected to its use in the franchise's promotional campaign.

The promotional clips prominently feature CSK players, including legendary former captain M. S. Dhoni and newly signed star Sanju Samson. Samson recently enjoyed a stellar run in international cricket and was named Player of the Tournament in the 2026 T20 World Cup before being picked by CSK in the IPL auction held in November last year.

Sun Network seeks court order against Chennai Super Kings over promo song usage

The Chennai-based franchise, led by skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad, has been actively releasing promotional material in the run-up to the tournament, generating excitement among fans. However, the legal challenge from Sun Network has added an unexpected twist just weeks before the start of the competition.

The IPL 2026 season is scheduled to begin on March 28, with defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru taking on Sunrisers Hyderabad at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru.

Five-time champions CSK will begin their campaign on March 30 with an away fixture against the Rajasthan Royals. The outcome of the court proceedings could determine whether the franchise will be allowed to continue using the popular Rajinikanth film songs in its promotional content.

Rahul Dravid to receive BCCI's CK Nayudu Lifetime Award

BENGALURU

Former India captain Rahul Dravid will be honoured with the prestigious Col C. K. Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) at its annual BCCI Naman Awards ceremony scheduled for March 15.

The award recognises Dravid's immense contribution to Indian cricket as a player, leader and coach across more than three decades. Widely regarded as one of the greatest batters of his generation, the Bengaluru-born cricketer played a pivotal role in shaping India's success during the late 1990s and 2000s.

Dravid was a cornerstone of India's formidable batting line-up that included legends such as Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, V. V. S. Laxman and Virender Sehwag. Known for his resilience and technical excellence, he earned the nickname "The Wall" for his ability to anchor innings under pressure.

Making his Test debut at Lord's Cricket Ground in 1996, Dravid narrowly missed a century with a score of 95. However, the innings marked the beginning of a remarkable international career that lasted 16 years. In 164 Test matches, he amassed 13,288 runs at an average of 52.31, including 36 centuries.

In One-Day Internationals, Dravid scored 10,889 runs in 344 matches with 12 centuries and 83 half-centuries, becoming one of the few players in history to cross 10,000 runs in both Tests and ODIs. He also appeared in a solitary T20 International in 2011 in Manchester, memorably hitting three consecutive sixes.

Among his most celebrated performances was the historic partnership with V. V. S. Laxman during the 2001 Test against Australia national cricket team at Eden Gardens. Their effort helped India script an extraordinary comeback victory after following on and ended Australia's dominant 16-match winning streak.

Dravid also delivered memorable performances overseas, including a double century and match-winning knock in Adelaide in 2003 and his career-best 270 against Pakistan national cricket team in Multan in 2004, which helped India secure its only Test series win in Pakistan.

After retiring in 2012, Dravid transitioned into coaching, guiding India's Under-19 and India A teams before becoming head of the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru. In 2021, he was appointed head coach of the Indian men's team, forming a successful partnership with captain Rohit Sharma.

Under his tenure, India reached the 2023 Cricket World Cup final and ended a long ICC trophy drought by winning the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024, cementing Dravid's legacy as one of the most influential figures in Indian cricket.

FANS FURIOUS AS SUNRISERS SIGN ABRAR AHMED

NEW DELHI

Sunrisers Hyderabad's ownership group has come under intense criticism from Indian fans after bidding for Pakistan spinner Abrar Ahmed during the auction for The Hundred, sparking a wave of backlash on social media.

The franchise, owned by the Sun Group and headed by co-owner Kavya Maran, successfully secured the Pakistani spinner for £190,000 (around ₹2.34 crore) for its Leeds-based team. The signing, however, quickly became controversial among Indian cricket fans who accused the franchise of ignoring national sentiment.

Ahmed has previously drawn criticism in India for social media comments in 2025 that were widely interpreted as mocking the Indian Armed Forces during a period of heightened tensions between India and Pakistan. The resurfacing of those remarks triggered a storm online soon after the auction concluded.

Several users flooded the comment sections of the franchise's official pages, while hashtags such as #ShameOnSRH and #BoycottSunrisers began trending on X. Some fans even called for a boycott of the IPL franchise, questioning the decision to sign a player linked to remarks considered disrespectful to India.

The controversy comes at a time when Indian-owned franchises have historically avoided signing Pakistani players in several overseas leagues. Similar trends were seen in competitions such as the SA20 and ILT20, where teams with Indian ownership rarely bid for cricketers from Pakistan.

Sun Group last year acquired a 49 per cent stake in the Leeds franchise from the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), while the remaining 51 per cent was purchased from Yorkshire County Cricket Club. The acquisition made it one of four Indian-owned teams participating in The Hundred.

Reports suggest the ECB had warned franchises ahead of the auction that excluding players based on nationality could violate UK anti-discrimination laws.

Meanwhile, several prominent Pakistani players, including Haris Rauf, Shadab Khan and Saim Ayub, remained unsold. Only two Pakistani players were picked overall, with spinner Usman Tariq joining Birmingham Phoenix.

Defending the decision, head coach Daniel Vettori said the franchise targeted Ahmed after missing out on England leg-spinner Adil Rashid in the auction. Vettori described Ahmed as a strong T20 option, highlighting his impressive record of 52 wickets in 38 T20 internationals at an economy rate of 6.67.

Sabalenka, Sinner reach BNP Paribas Open semis as Medvedev advances amid controversy

INDIAN WELLS

Top players continued their strong runs at the BNP Paribas Open as Aryna Sabalenka and Jannik Sinner advanced to the semifinals on Thursday, while Daniil Medvedev progressed after benefiting from a disputed call during his quarterfinal victory.

World No.1 Carlos Alcaraz also booked his place in the men's semifinals with a straight-sets win over Cameron Norrie, 6-3, 6-4. The Spaniard has now extended his winning streak to 16 matches in 2026 and remains on course for his third title in four years at the prestigious ATP Masters 1000 event in California.

On the women's side, Sabalenka edged past Canada's Victoria Mboko 7-6 (0), 6-4 in a tightly contested quarterfinal to keep alive her hopes of winning her maiden Indian Wells title. The Belarusian has yet to drop a set in the tournament and credited her composure during crucial points for the victory.

"That was a tough battle today," Sabalenka said after the match. "I'm happy with the level I played in those key moments in each set."

Sabalenka will next face Czech player Linda Noskova in the semifinal after the 14th seed defeated Australia's Talia Gibson 6-2, 4-6, 6-2.

In the men's draw, Italy's Sinner delivered a dominant performance against 25th-seeded American Learner Tien, winning 6-1, 6-2 with the help of 10 aces. The victory ended Tien's impressive run as the youngest American to reach the Indian Wells quarterfinals since Michael Chang achieved the feat in 1992.

Sinner will meet Alexander Zverev in the semifinal after the German cruised past France's Arthur Fils 6-2, 6-3 with a strong serving display.

Meanwhile, Medvedev's 6-1, 7-5 win over defending champion Jack Draper sparked controversy after a disputed point late in the second set. During a rally, Draper gestured that Medvedev's shot had landed long before the point continued. Medvedev later requested a video review, and chair umpire Aurelie Tourte ruled that Draper's gesture could have distracted his opponent, awarding the point to Medvedev.

The decision drew boos from the crowd but helped Medvedev secure a crucial break before closing out the match. Medvedev will now face Alcaraz in what promises to be a high-profile semifinal clash at Indian Wells.

Trump says Iran World Cup participation inappropriate

WASHINGTON

Donald Trump said that while the Iran national football team would technically be welcome to compete at the 2026 FIFA World Cup, he believes it may not be appropriate for the team to participate given the current geopolitical situation and concerns over safety.

Posting on his social media platform Truth Social, the U.S. President suggested that the presence of Iran's football team at the tournament could pose risks amid heightened tensions in the region.

"The Iran National Soccer Team is welcome to the World Cup, but I really don't believe it is appropriate that they be there, for their own life and safety," Trump wrote.

His remarks came shortly after Iranian officials indicated that the team might not take part in the global football tournament following recent military developments involving the United States and Israel.

Iran's sports minister said on Wednesday that the country may not be able to participate in the 2026 World Cup after the United States carried out airstrikes alongside Israel targeting locations in Tehran, further escalating tensions between the two countries.

The evolving situation has raised concerns about travel, security and diplomatic complications that could affect Iran's ability to compete in international sporting events hosted by the United States.

The expanded 48-team World Cup is scheduled to be jointly hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico from June 11 to July 19, 2026. The tournament will mark the first time the competition is played across three host nations and with a larger number of teams.

According to preliminary scheduling plans, Iran was expected to play some of its group-stage matches in American cities such as Los Angeles and Seattle.

Iran has been a regular participant in recent World Cups and remains one of Asia's strongest footballing nations. However, the ongoing political and military tensions could complicate logistics, visas and security arrangements for players and officials.

Football governing body FIFA has not yet issued an official statement regarding Iran's participation. The situation continues to be closely monitored as organisers prepare for what is expected to be the largest World Cup in the tournament's history.

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